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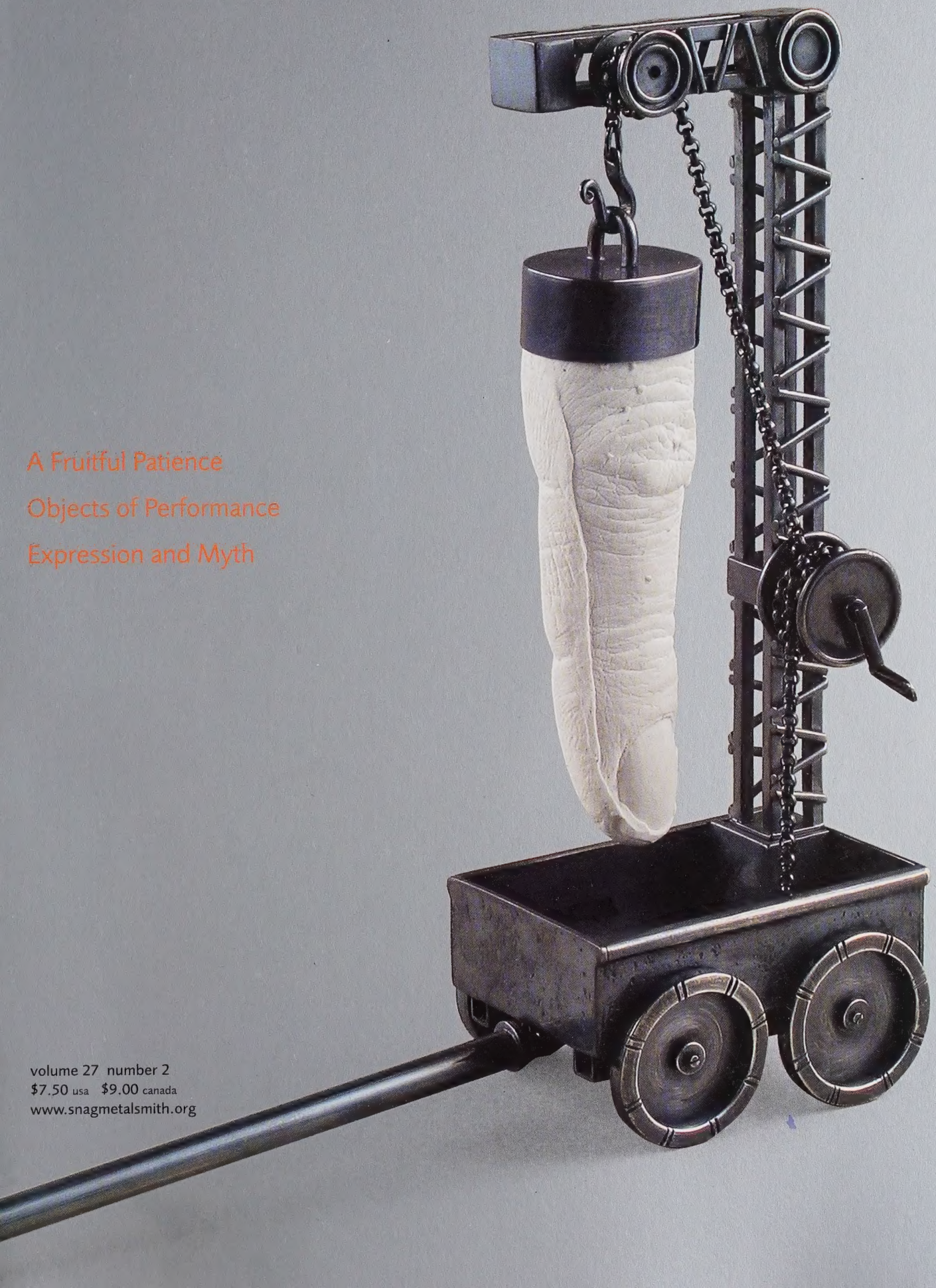

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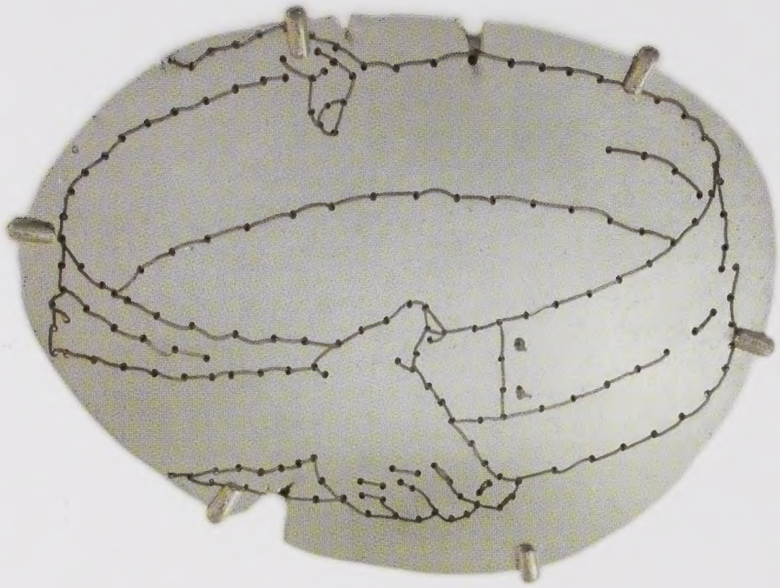

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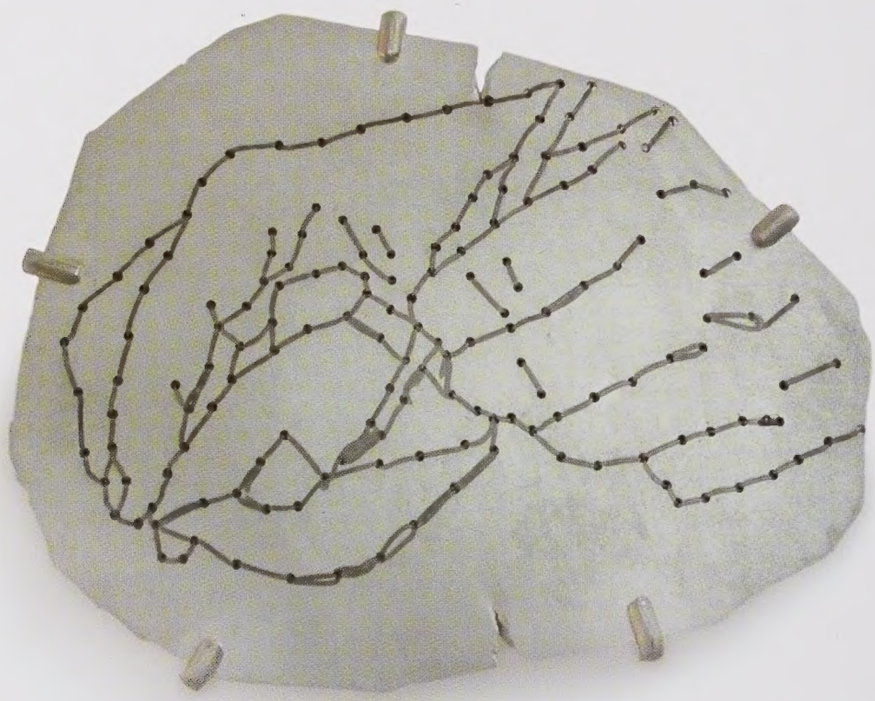

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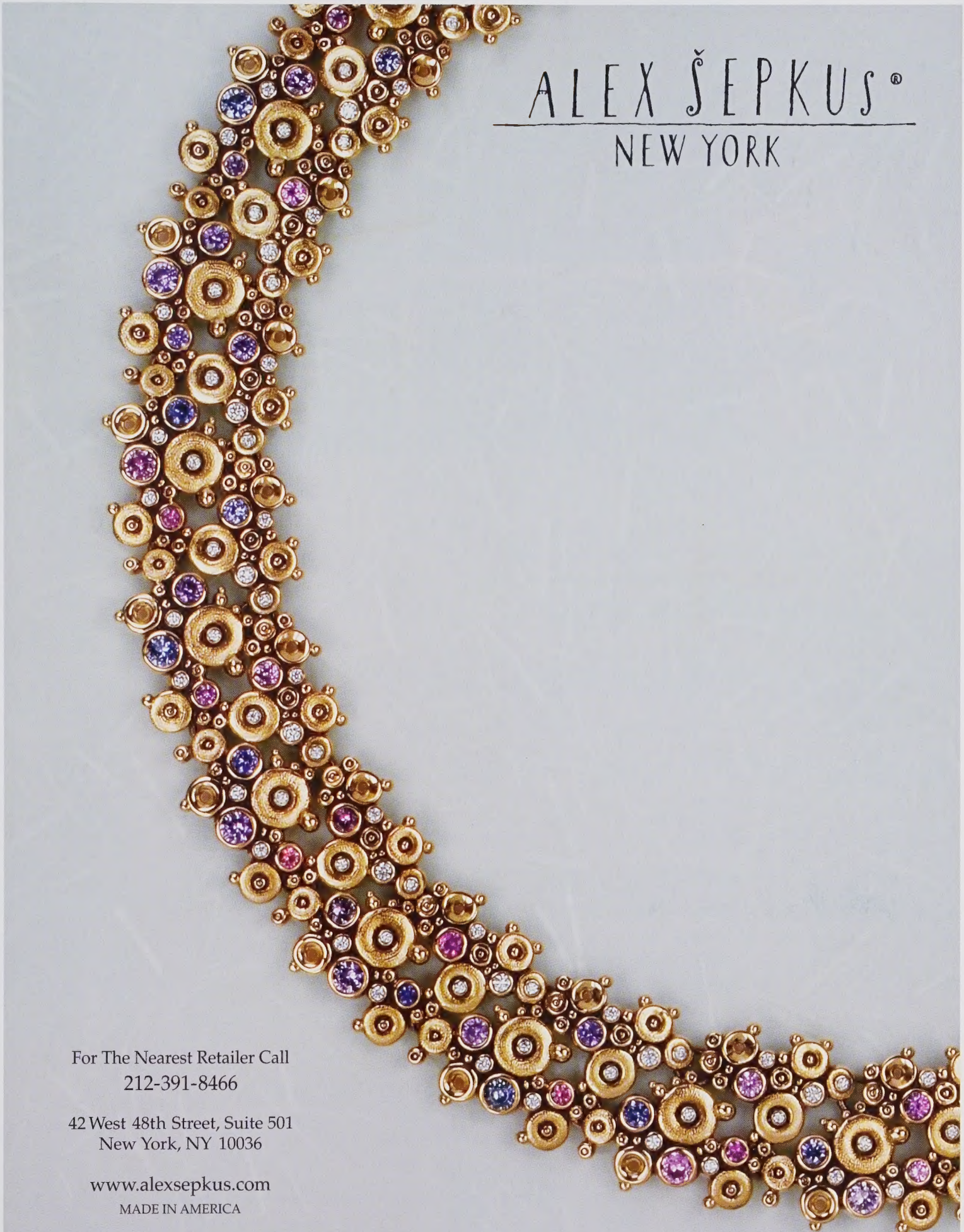

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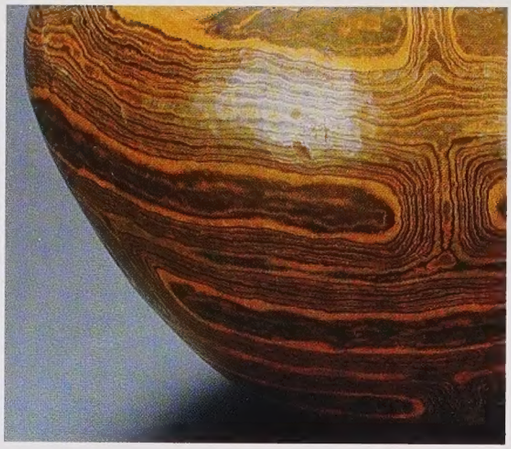

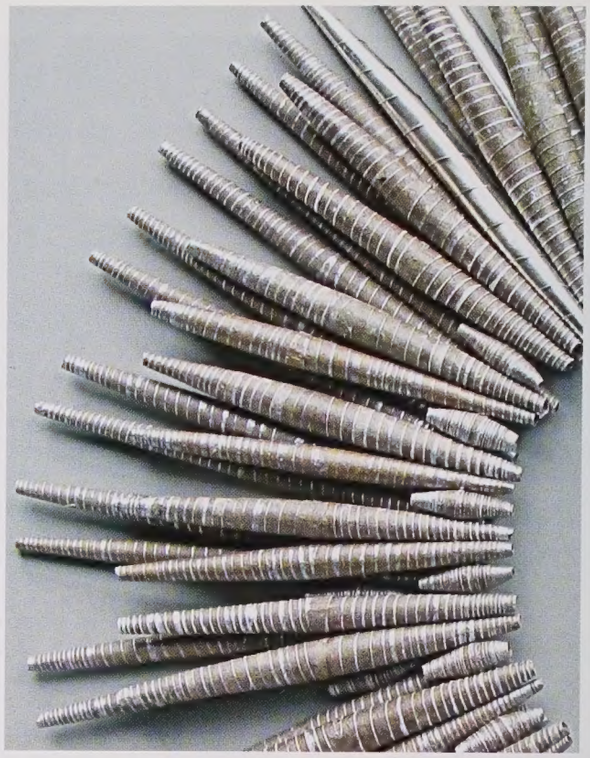

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Photo: Rod Slemmons

PRESENTATIONS

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Ralph Caplan

Design guru, Former editor-in-chief, I.D. magazine, Director Emeritus of the International Design Conference, Aspen

Caplan is the author of the bestselling books, *By Design* and *Cracking the Whip*.

Phillip Baldwin

Elizabeth Brim

Michael Croft

Carissa Hussong

Tom Joyce

Hyewon Lee

Randy Milhoan

Rosanne Raab with special guest Tod Pardon

Felieke van der Leest

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FROM THE EDITOR

SUZANNE RAMLJAK

Postmodern culture, with its collapse of traditional hierarchies and access to instant global reach, has sown fertile ground for new creative strains. Fusion cuisine, fusion music, and hybrids of every kind flourish in the shuffle. While purists may bemoan such cross-fertilization, the resulting blends help to foster the diversity of cultural life.

As botanists and animal breeders have long known, crossbreeding can yield more vital offspring, a condition referred to as "hybrid vigor." Unlike their inbred counterparts, who inherit undesirable genes from related parents, mixed breeds tend to thrive in their genetic multiplicity. Although often derided for lack of purity—as "mutts" or "mongrels" in the canine world—hybrids enjoy greater fertility and rate of survival.

A similar dynamic can be found in the fields of craft and art, when various genres or media intermix. The work of cover artist Kiff Slemmons provides a case in point. As author Tacey Rosolowski conveys, Slemmons's latest series "melds metal with performance, opening a new direction for craft." This merger has generated a novel breed of craft object, one built on complex collaboration and multiple voices.

Likewise, the engaging metalwork of Kye-yeon Son is borne from a "beautiful fusion of the Korean aesthetic with an expressiveness that reflects her North American experience," according to writer Barbara Isherwood. A conjunction of two traditions, Son's art unites the best of both worlds.

Marvin Jensen's work, profiled here, embodies the vitality found in hybrid offspring. By crossing a chemistry background with superb craftsmanship with materials from hot rods and motorcycles, Jensen is able to produce unique strains of commonplace objects, from knives to chairs to tables. And the evolution of feature artist Brent Kington was spurred by his adoption of older foundry techniques, and further invigorated by an embrace of folk art weathervanes.

This same potent cross-fertilization is found in the multifaceted production of jeweler-sculptor-engineer-designer Ira Sherman, the subject of our "Studio," as well as in the encompassing metal installations found in "View." In all of the above cases, hybridization has resulted in fresh artistic breeds and has boosted the vitality of the metalsmithing species....

METALSMITH

a publication of SNAG, the organization for jewelers, designers and metalsmiths

***Metalsmith's* mission is to document, analyze, and promote excellence in jewelry and metalworking.**

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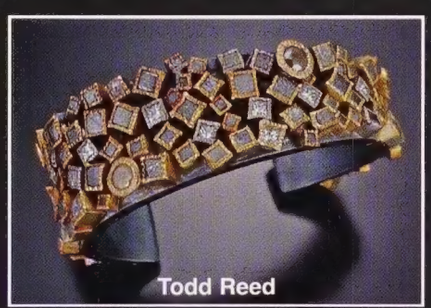
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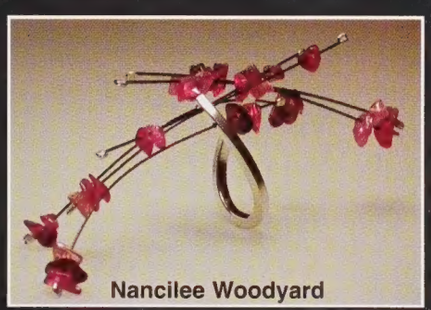
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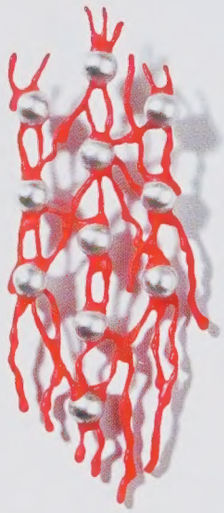

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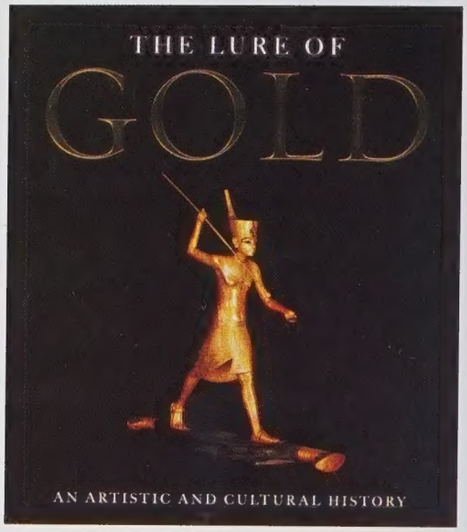
by Elizabeth McDevitt



The Lure of Gold: An Artistic and Cultural History

Hans-Gert Bachmann

Abbeville Press, New York, 2006

The Lure of Gold: An Artistic and Cultural History by Hans-Gert Bachmann is a lavishly illustrated volume about a subject that has engendered intense passion and controversy for the past six millennia. Over two hundred color photographs, many in full-page format against dramatic black backgrounds, document a complex topic for which readers have had an endless appetite, as evidenced by the number of books written about gold in recent years.

Dr. Bachmann, a renowned archaeometallurgist with experience in archaeology and the refining industry, provides an interesting perspective. He explores the intricate relationship between civilizations and gold, beginning with the earliest known cultures that may have used the metal. His knowledge of gold's metallurgical properties, its history of extraction and refining, and documented evidence of the cultures that have valued it in ritual, religious and secular contexts is impressive. Of special interest are several maps showing the location of gold deposits in ancient and modern times, as well as the spread of gold technology via trade routes. Another theme that runs through the book is gold currency as an object of exchange. Bachmann is well-versed in historical minting methods, the value of coins as a propaganda device, and both trade and the movement of people.

Each chapter is devoted to a different culture and historical epoch, beginning with the 4th millennium B.C., continuing to the Modern Age. While much of the information is established and many illustrations have been published before, Bachmann includes compelling new details such as the connection between astronomical and numerological knowledge and the mysterious conical gold "hats" from 1st Millennium Bronze Age cultures in northern Europe. His choice of objects previously not included in similar publications (such as the elegant pre-Hittite vessel from Alaca Hoyuk) is informative and refreshing. The high-quality close-up photographs of many of the objects allow the reader to closely examine details of workmanship.

The author's art historical discussion of the cultures of the Ancient Near East, the Eastern Mediterranean and Celtic Europe is thoroughly researched. Gold's association with power, divinity and social status is clearly described by the author and beautifully illustrated. His inclusion of the magnificent gold bust of Marcus Aurelius, for example, makes a strong statement about the power of Imperial Rome

While some areas of Bachmann's discussion are well researched, there are numerous technical inaccuracies, beginning with his discussion of granulation during the Etruscan period. His appellation of the technique as "soldering" is incorrect and the description of the details of the process is awkward and confusing. The granulation process has been well-researched and accurately described in numerous sources, one of which is cited in the bibliography (Wolters, Jochem. *Die Granulation. Geschichte und Technik einer alaten Goldschmiedekunst*), leaving the knowledgeable reader with doubts about the author's understanding of essential details about goldsmithing technology. Other inaccuracies are evident. Misuse of the word "chasing" occurs several times, in describing a filigree and granulated pendant from Fatimid Egypt, and in the chapter on gold in the New World.

Proceeding with his historical chronology of gold, the author surveys the traditions of a group of non-Western cultures under the section title "Great Cultures of the World." He begins with "The Islamic World," one of the weakest chapters in the book. While Bachmann presents gold in the religious and secular spheres with some accuracy, showing the use of gold luster paint in the elaborate tile work decoration of a 13th century Persian mosque, he neglects to mention periods in which important outstanding gold secular objects were made, such as the 16th- and 17th-century Persian Safavid Dynasty, during which elaborately made steel weapons and

Vollnagel presents a number of interesting discoveries that were a by-product of the new scientific age, such as electroforming, electroplating and the use of gold in medicine and computer technology.

armor were inlaid with gold. Most notably, he completely ignores the remarkable achievements in the use of gold in India during the Mughal Dynasty in the 16th and 17th centuries. The *kundan* inlay technique was perfected during this period and adopted by Ottoman goldsmiths whose achievements were also glossed over. Bachman includes an illustration of an Ottoman *kundan* inlaid vessel in the Topkapi Palace Museum, yet here again, the technical description contains multiple mistakes.

Bachmann's interest in certain ages and cultures seems skewed and is clearly evident in his extensively detailed chapter on pre-Columbian gold. While Bachmann presents many interesting facts concerning the Spanish conquest, the history of various tribes and the legend of El Dorado, he might have placed greater emphasis on technique.

In contrast to this disproportionably voluminous chapter on "The New World," the chapter on African gold simplifies and abbreviates the achievements of the multiple cultures on this continent. Although there is some useful information and a few beautiful examples, there are also errors. Bachmann states incorrectly that the Fulbe earrings from Mali are "produced from flat rods that have been hammered into cruciform shape using a small chisel." In fact, they begin as thick square rods that are scored and then forged with a series of graduated hammers. To enrich their gold color, they are not pickled in a "concoction of iron rust and plant sap for several days." Instead, the gold color is enriched using a heated acidic solution containing alum (similar to the process used in Pre-Columbian gold).

The vast topic of "The Western World from the Middle Ages to the Present Day" is the final and one of the most expansive sections of Bachmann's book. The use of gold in the sacred realm during the Byzantine period and the Middle Ages is well-described and illustrated with excellent images. However, the author leaves out such outstanding examples as the early 12th century Khakhuli Virgin triptych (State Museum of Fine Arts, Georgia), the largest Byzantine enameled icon ever produced. This historic period, as well as the successive Renaissance and Baroque periods, are clearly favored by the author.

A second author, art historian Jorg Vollnagel, wrote the final chapter: "The Modern Age." He examines the importance of gold as a commodity and its influence on the cultural history of the late 19th century and the 20th century. Vollnagel presents a number of interesting discoveries that were a by-product of the new scientific age, such as electroforming, electroplating, and the use of gold in medicine and computer technology.

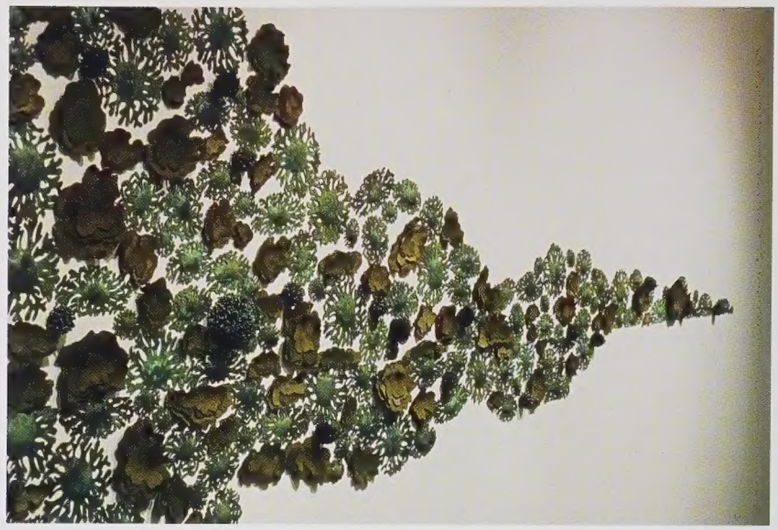
While there are representative examples from nearly each decade of the 20th century, all but one of them is European. There is a visible void in the absence of work by any 20th-century American artist. Furthermore, the author neglects to acknowledge the work of the many talented artists while highlighting that of New York hip-hop jeweler, Jacob Arabo, exponent of the vulgar, so-called "pimp style." Perhaps this genre intrigues the author, but by devoting space to this crass commercial style, Vollnagel insults a large number of artist-jewelers who deserve to be recognized. They are, after all, among the readership that the authors of this book hope to attract.

The Lure of Gold is a beautifully produced book. Yet, it will be of more interest to those in need of generalized information about the history of gold than to the educated metalsmith who may be disappointed by its multiple inconsistencies. While some inaccuracies may be due in part to translation, they yield misinformation. The authors have missed an opportunity to create the "gold standard" for books on material culture.

Elizabeth McDevitt is a goldsmith, teacher, and art historian residing in Colorado Springs.

VIEW

by Katherine Ingraham



Metals Installations

Installations are not new, nor is the art form lacking in critical discussion of its merits. In most major museum collections you would be hard pressed to find examples of three-dimensional work that does not fit into this loosely defined category. Between video and The Multiple (my caps), a great deal of conceptual ground has been covered, sometimes literally.

In his series on "Difficult Art Forms," the amusing Stuart Jeffries of *The Guardian* asks, "What is installation art? Why has it become so ubiquitous? And why is it so bloody irritating?" Granted, he was posing these questions within the context of the late 1990s British art-star/YBA phenomenon when there was a legitimate criticism of some of the work as being one-trick and overly insider, never mind being devoid of the craftsmanship that would at least confer some traditional art status. To counter this last detail, most metalsmiths are, by training and inclination, highly skilled at their craft and can move fluidly amongst various ways of making.

There is a significant history of metals installations that includes the work of Beverly Penn, Gary Griffin, Sandra Enterline and Cornelia Parker as well as the European and academic tendency towards installing jewelry in a created environment that enhances its potency and meaning. Beyond this, however, I believe that installation is currently enjoying a renaissance with a number of newly minted MFAs choosing to work either partially or predominantly within this format. Three artists whose work I find particularly compelling at this moment are Megan Cronin in Brooklyn, Lauren Fensterstock in Portland, Maine, and Veleta Vancza in Philadelphia.

Cronin's work is simultaneously sculptural and graphic and seeks to highlight the destructive tension between nature and architecture. Pieces from her solo show at the Clark Gallery in Lincoln, Massachusetts (including *Unfettered* and *Influenced*), were installed to subtly reference the underlying physical structure of the gallery's architecture—from the studs to the various light sources—and the standard of hanging artwork 60 inches on center. A more recent piece comprised of small metal and fiber botanical forms was installed along a predetermined "waterline" in a stairwell at the Maine College of Art. The viewer could walk up and through the piece and engage with the space from several perspectives. Cronin's installation intentionally referred to mold and the intrusion of nature into the manmade environment that psychologically we need to perceive as safe. The piece took on additional meaning when Hurricane Katrina hit shortly thereafter.

Cronin's work strikes an uneasy but satisfying balance between surface beauty and the "ugliness" of invasive destruction. A self-professed lover of natural forms and of fabricating sumptuous components, her impulses lead her in both directions. Cronin also periodically installs work outdoors, which allows her to explore this tension in its opposite setting.

Cronin and Vancza share some structural devices in their work—both have enlisted sound visualization programs to help determine composition and both have used the wall on a grand scale to dramatic effect. Where Cronin's language speaks of invasion and infestation, Vancza deals with the aesthetics of quality and perfection. Having previously made jewelry that was "wearable in theory," Vancza grew frustrated with her pieces' lack of a life after a show. Shifting gears in graduate school, she started working with enamel and embraced a more experimental approach. Her "B.L.O.B." installations emerged during this period as a result of a deep immersion in the process and material properties. Exuberant color, organic form and the visual power of the swarm characterize this series. While doing a recent arts/industry residency at Kohler, Vancza's work took on a new conceptual resonance and became less about process. Her "A-1 Kwality" series includes large cast-iron diamond forms flawlessly enameled in mostly tasteful tones in reference (and deference) to the A-1 standard of quality that the Kohler Company demands of all its factory products. (Mostly tasteful because of the glow-in-the-dark versions that Vancza developed by mixing phosphorescent pigment with enamel). In this work, she addresses the conflicted feelings many artists have towards "excessive" quality and its association with mass production.

One of Lauren Fensterstock's motivations for her work is for the viewer to have a sublime experience and then to proceed

Megan Cronin
Unfettered (detail), 2003
copper, felt
32 x 222 x 2"

unencumbered by anxiety about issues of permanence or value. This is also an important aspect of her studio practice and she describes making a piece as a process of letting go. Such concerns are evident in a work like *Precarious Heirloom #6*, a soap bar studded with pearls and diamonds—not an installation per se, but more of a performance-based piece.

Fensterstock's commitment to the process over the object allows her to move in and out of the installation format with ease. This highlights one of the genre's compelling qualities for artists—the ability to reconfigure a work through addition or subtraction, or by simply shifting the parameters. In Fensterstock's case, the condition of decay, or demise, is often present. For an artist who declines to "serve the object" above all, moving the work in a more interactive direction could be seen as a natural progression. Another way is by responding to the qualities of a specific site, as in Fensterstock's installation for "Sacred and Profane," an annual exhibition held an abandoned WWII military bunker on Peaks Island, Maine. She filled the cavernous cement bunker, which lacks windows or electricity, with tiny chandeliers constructed from 30-gauge silver wire and delicate chain. They were lit by torches and were designed to "provide a small moment of refinement and domesticity within this frightening environment."

According to art critic Hal Foster, the key transformation in Western art since the 1960s has been a shift from the vertical to the horizontal viewing plane. One salient quality about this trio of artists is their flexibility in working with different scales, viewing planes, formats, and materials. Fensterstock paints exquisitely and makes multi-layered installations from these works, Vancza plans to go even larger scale and add public art to her repertoire, and Cronin believes that art also lies in the details of one's life and environment, from cooking to conversation. Such openness translates optimally into installation, keeping their work fresh, engaging, and free from the tyranny of a "signature style." ◘

Katherine Ingraham is a writer and metalsmith living in Brookline, Massachusetts.

clockwise from top left
Megan Cronin
Influenced (detail), 2003
cast bronze, copper, MDF, gesso
41 x 10 x 11"

Veleta Vancza
B.L.O.B., 2002
vitreous enamel on copper
installed on 10 x 6' wall

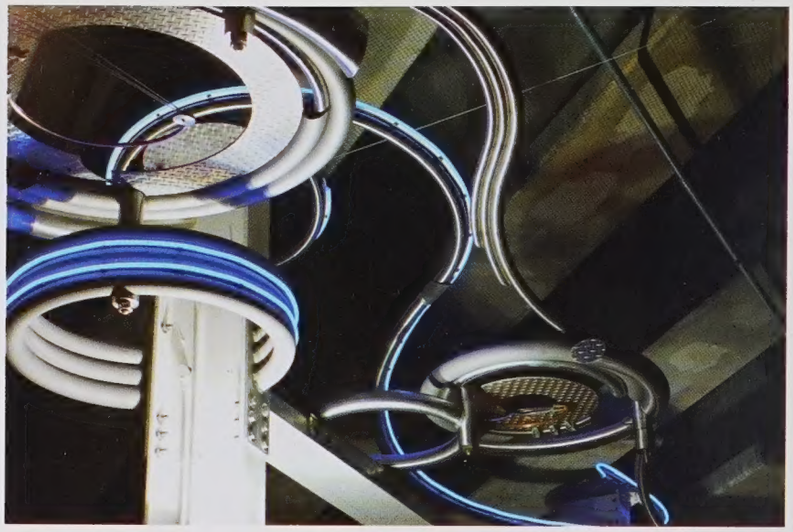
Veleta Vancza
Carbonado/Kwality, 2006
cast iron, vitreous enamel
each 19 x 16 x 12"

Lauren Fensterstock
Chandelier Portrait, installation
from "Sacred and Profane," 2001
silver

Lauren Fensterstock
Precarious Heirloom #6, 2003
soap, pearls, diamonds

STUDIO

by Elizabeth McDevitt



Ira Sherman

Ira Sherman is an extraordinary artist and metalsmith. He is a master jeweler, internationally recognized sculptor, designer, intuitive engineer, and more—a modern artistic wizard. He lives with his wife Nancy and two sons in a converted duplex house tucked away in a unique, early nineteenth-century Denver neighborhood, which is home to many artists.

The boundaries of his workspace extend beyond its doors and into the neighborhood. In order to appreciate the full scope of his studio, our visit began with a walk up the street to his latest creation, a monumental sculpture for the Denver Light Rail (RTD) at the Louisiana Street station. The *Stange Machine* (named after a close mentor and collector of his work) is a beautiful, kinetic sculpture that symbolizes the sophisticated technology of the transit system. Suspended over the platform, the *Stange Machine* is a complex, interactive construction of 1,500 pounds of structural stainless-steel tubing bent into a graceful moveable sculpture. It incorporates curves reminiscent of the moving human form and locomotive wheel patterns, as well as some actual components of the rail system. The sculpture can be set into smooth motion by applying rotational pressure to a large steel orb at its base. A series of ball-bearing assemblies in fixed collars attached to curved arms facilitates this feat. A continuous line of brilliant blue lighting imbedded in flexible polymer tubing highlights the curved lines of the abstract wheel forms. Sherman sees this work as "the largest piece of jewelry" he has done thus far.

For those familiar with his previous work, such as the "Impenetrable Devices" series (recently shown at the Ornamental Museum in Memphis, Tennessee), the *Stange Machine* seems to be a logical progression for an artist who has an amazing array of technical skills at his fingertips. When asked how he could possibly know how to construct such a large and technically complex piece, Sherman simply replies that he is a self-taught engineer with an intuitive understanding of how things work. Indeed!

Experiencing this newly unveiled, interactive sculpture enabled me to fully comprehend what I was about to see. "Studios" is a more apt description of Sherman's workspace, a labyrinthine succession of well-equipped rooms, each dedicated to specific functions. In what was once a living room, a massive jeweler's bench is fitted with workspace for two people. Incorporated into the bench, below the level of the top, is a powerful ventilation system. In the area surrounding the bench, every available space is well-utilized. Adjacent to the jewelry studio is Sherman's music studio, a small cozy space where he releases the tension of sitting at the bench by playing the drums or taking a short rest on the mattress below a beautiful stained glass window. Just past the jewelry studio is a closet packed from floor to ceiling with cross-referenced wax models, each in its own display box. Continuing toward the back of the house, this studio, with a large drafting table, computer and light box is where Sherman designs architectural-scale projects. This room also holds more well-labeled storage areas, a ventilated, heavy-duty polishing motor and lapidary equipment. An important niche in this area of the house is his wife Nancy's embroidery studio.

Many of Sherman's sculptures have moving, functional parts. For this aspect of his work, he utilizes his skill as an electrician (self-taught, of course). An array of wires and small parts reveal his self-confessed tendency to "take things apart." Even as a child, he was interested in dismantling toys to see how they functioned. It is no wonder that a "Furby" (as an obnoxious little robot toy that could converse with its owner until it [or the owner] fell asleep) is a component of many of his works, including the *Stange Machine*. Sherman actually uses the Furby's internal computer to animate and interact with many of his sculptures' movements. His ability to incorporate both pneumatic and electronic assemblies is truly beyond the scope of most sculptors and metalsmiths. Not surprisingly, he conducts workshops teaching these techniques.

Just beyond the electronics room, the innermost studio is a fully equipped casting area where he alloys his own metal and produces one-of-a-kind, custom jewelry. As with all of the other work areas, an efficient ventilation system is part of the design.

As might be expected, the garden in back of the Sherman's house is itself a work of art. A Zen-like environment, where every

Stange Machine, Denver, 2006 (detail)
stainless steel, aluminum, copper, neon
30 x 10 x 15'

corner is an intriguing and well-planned space, the garden is a peaceful respite connecting studio spaces. Just beyond this quiet retreat is a massive workshop where he has every conceivable large-scale machine (various presses, hammers, milling machines, and welding equipment) many of which he has made himself. His technical abilities are mind-boggling. Here, Sherman can be a blacksmith, a structural engineer, a machinist...in short, a mechanical genius. No piece of metal is considered scrap, rather, material for a future sculpture. This huge space is so densely packed with machinery that Sherman has started to fill a second building with large tools, such as the seven-foot-tall, fifty-pound trip hammer that he made in a blacksmithing workshop in Salt Lake City. In such workshops, he occasionally teams with other multi-talented metalsmiths to produce large-scale tools for which they draw lots to decide who brings them home.

It seems as though there is no limit to what Sherman can make with his multiple, intuitive, and practical skills. He sees himself as a "problem solver." This is reflected not only in his own needs as a metalsmith and sculptor, but in a more philosophical bent. His series of small sculptures "Panaceas to Persistent Problems" as well as his anti-rape series, "Impenetrable Devices," artfully and humorously address such everyday issues as aggression, desire, and the quest for beauty. Whether or not the problems are truly solved (many of them will always be with us), Ira Sherman brings new meaning to the word "panacea." His solutions amaze us in their ingenuity, sense of humor, and formal exquisiteness, with a little bit of magic.

Elizabeth McDevitt is a goldsmith, teacher, and art historian residing in Colorado Springs.

clockwise from top
Ira Sherman riding his "Furby" activated exercise bike (the bike is in control, not the rider) installed at Denver's Art Yard Gallery.
Photo: Elizabeth McDevitt

Woven Vessel Brooch with Lapis, 2004
14k copper-depleted yellow gold, lapis
2 3/8 x 1 x 3/4"

The two-person jeweler's bench in Ira Sherman's Denver studio.
Photo: Elizabeth McDevitt

Kiff Slemmons'

Objects of Performance

by Tacey A. Rosolowski

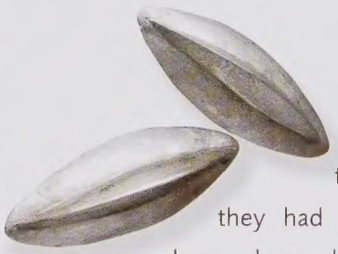
I think of myself as a modest performance artist. I activate objects with ideas. Then I put them out there and things happen to other people.[1]
- Kiff Slemmons

Art belongs by right to the ongoing conversation between friends of the work, intimate lovers of the work, its enemies, and all those whose world is informed and transformed by it.[2]
- Gary Hill

RoseLee Goldberg, a critic of avant-garde performative arts, notes that whenever an artistic movement has felt its vigor wane, it has turned to performance to find new energy and directions.[3] In the past two decades, metalwork has struggled to find a fresh identity for the new millennium. With her most recent series, "Re:Pair and Imperfection," Kiff Slemmons melds metal with performance, opening a new direction for craft.

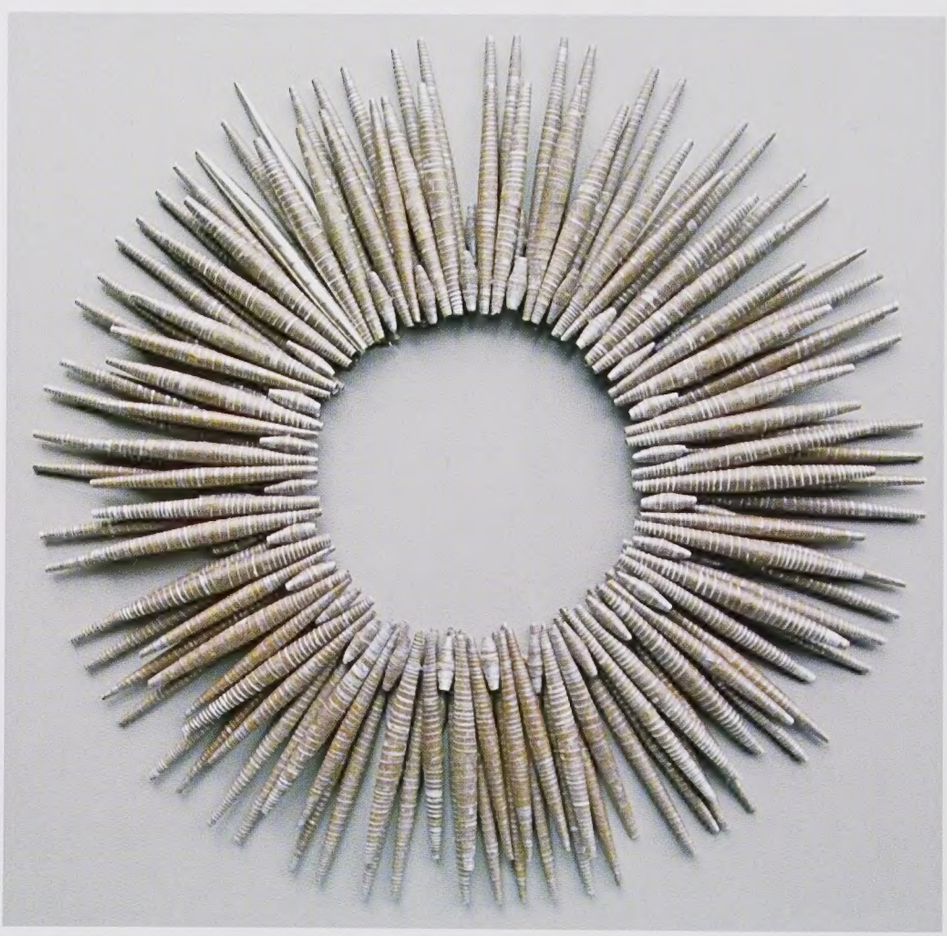
While Goldberg specifically refers to theatrical presentations, performance can be understood more broadly. It can include the conceptual energy giving rise to a work, the physical gestures captured in an object and the interpretive energy demanded from an audience. Slemmons refers to herself as a performance artist in these terms. On an unprecedented scale in craft, "Re:Pair and Imperfection" reveals—performs—the mechanisms of making and receiving art. Slemmons is uniquely positioned for this task. Self-taught and unattached to any particular jewelry tradition, she cites those quintessential outsiders and art radicals, the Dadaists, as a main artistic reference point, noting, "I try to be my own avant-garde."[4] "Re:Pair and Imperfection" captures the freedom of movement her position as a quasi-outsider affords her. Slemmons has, arguably, created a new category of craft object, one fully located within the terms of postmodernism. Her achievement requires a look beyond the works grouped under "Re:Pair and Imperfection" to her concept of "the series" and its exhibition.

Lupanar Reliquary (re: Keith Lewis), 2006
silver, dyed mother-of-pearl, amber, mica, fabric, wax
pin: 7 1/2 x 3 1/2 x 1/2"



Slemmons began by writing to jewelers and metalsmiths to request a piece of work that they had abandoned because it was damaged or no longer of interest. She said she would create objects of jewelry from each artist's "fragments" (her term for the contributions), but would not repair them in any conventional sense. Eighteen artists contributed thirty fragments so that Slemmons might "expand and celebrate their orphaned vitality," exploring how one person's imperfection was another's possibility.[5] She has created thirty-three objects, trimming some flaws away, using others and, in some cases, failing to identify the imperfection at all.

At the Chicago opening of "Re:Pair and Imperfection," Gary Griffin (who offered the steel flower with detached petal used in *Gridlock*) mused that he had always envied musicians because they play other people's music as well as their own. Slemmons, he observed, had found a way to play other people's music.[6] Slemmons says that she "performed" the fragments. Committed to doing nothing these artists would not approve of (though she solicited no input), she used the fragments as scores or scripts that enabled her to "pair" and "repair" herself with her contributors' aesthetics.



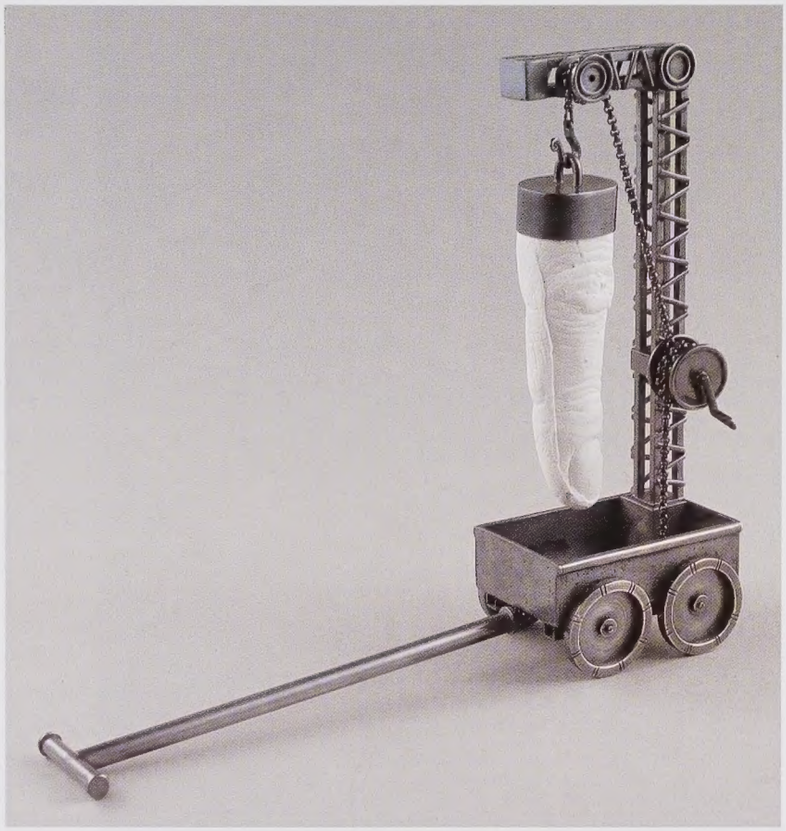
June Schwarcz gave Slemmons long-stemmed fronds of copper—scraps from the electroforming process. Slemmons had visited Schwarcz's studio to learn how to enamel some copper screening. *Horn* binds the two artists' elements together in a glowing, organic plume of red, yellow, and orange that ventures outside Slemmons' customary techniques and visual vocabulary. Sandra Enterline offered two silver lozenges

top
Whisker Squints (re: Sandra Enterline), 2005
silver, pearl, cat whiskers
goggles: 1 3/4 x 7 x 3"

above
Spray (re: Rachelle Thiewes), 2005
silver, handmade paper
necklace: diameter 15"

that reminded Slemmons of Eskimo goggles so she connected them with a pearl, created viewing apertures, and added some eyelashes to create *Whisker Squints*, playfully elegant eye wear reminiscent of icy northern climes. She comes into near-perfect balance with Rachelle Thiewes, who sent two sterling spikes, or "thorns," from a past series. Slemmons polished out the surface flaws and incorporated them into *Spray*, a pair of necklaces bursting with thorn-shaped paper elements, hand-rolled so the paper's edges—inked in silver—snake around the forms. Spiky and spiraling, *Spray* explodes outwardly and throbs. Optically active, it also sways conceptually between Thiewes and Slemmons. The symmetry, density and repetition refer clearly to Thiewes, yet Slemmons reappears in the characteristically rough textures, the ephemeral materials and neutral, rough surfaces.

Here and throughout "Re:Pair and Imperfection," Slemmons plays her own and others' music and



The object, flawed from one perspective, had been transformed into a differently beautiful object.

creates hybrid objects—"multivocalic," to use postmodern parlance—speaking in more than one voice. Slemmons designed the exhibition to reinforce this plural structure. She displays each piece in a presentation box. A black-and-white photograph of the artist's fragment is mounted above. Slemmons also represents her contributors' aesthetic personae with a grouping of their finished works. The entire installation sets a conceptual stage: the viewer can visualize the way Slemmons—and her multivocalic objects—maneuvers among different artistic voices.

Searching for a visual metaphor to characterize her project, Slemmons recalled a pitcher she saw in a Welsh antique shop: pink porcelain, shattered and reconstructed, with a metal armature holding each shard in place. The object, flawed from one perspective, had been transformed into a differently beautiful object. Each of Slemmons' pieces is a transformative "armature" constructed from another's shard. Early in her career, she established her aesthetic of the found and ready made, of asymmetry, marks of wear, dents and cracks. She questions the assumption that beauty can be achieved only through formal or technical perfection: perfection can go "out of whack," she asserts, elevating itself as absolute even while it produces "beauty without vitality...even [a] dead beauty." Slemmons feels more affinity with the Japanese conception of *wabi-sabi* where, as in the pitcher, random and natural intrusions interrupt—and enhance—formal beauty.

"Re:Pair and Imperfection" provided Slemmons with a new order of flawed, found object, one that broadened her space of artistic performance. Slemmons says that *Fingerlift*, for example, "quotes" her links with Lisa Gralnick. It foregrounds their aesthetic approaches, their common interest in mechanical objects, and their concern with the hand as a tool of knowledge and icon of the maker. Gralnick provided a plaster finger (snapped from a cast of her hand when Slemmons protested that she didn't want the whole thing). Slemmons mounted it as

Fingerlift (re: Lisa Gralnick), 2005
silver, cast plaster
cart, 5 x 6 1/2 x 1 1/2"
finger pendant, 3 x 1 x 1/2"

above
Gift (re: Thomas Gentille), 2006
silver, fused gold, titanium
pin: 3 1/4 x 2 1/2 x 1/4"

below
Relic and Fault (re: Thomas Gentille), 2005
silver, mica, wrapped synthetic resin chip
two finger ring: 1 x 1 3/4 x 1 1/4"

a pendant to be displayed, hanging, from a scaffold fixed on a tiny cart. She notes that *Fingerlift* is the most Dadaist piece in the series: mechanical and toy-like, an unclassifiable object. Significantly, the first Dadaists were performers, an *avant avant-garde*, who later expressed their ideas in objects.[7] *Fingerlift* is particularly resonant, since it performs the craft field's beliefs about the artist.

Here the artist's hand is monumental and literal, just as for craft the artist hangs like a fantasm over the work, feeding its "aura of authenticity," to use Walter Benjamin's famous phrase. Sometimes the object *is* the artist, as in this piece (or when jewelry *cognoscenti* recognize a work and say, for example, "That's John Iverson"). Of course such features define art by its opposition to the market system of mass reproduction, commodified and disposable objects, and alienated labor. However, if the artist and craft object provide antidotes to this system, they are also endangered by it. In *Fingerlift*, Slemmons uses the cart to suggest the medieval vendors of religious relics. Here it carries the artist-as-relic. The vehicle also

Aranea (re: Bettina Dittlman), 2005
silver, enameled copper pin: 3 x 8 x 1 3/4"

This personal achievement allows her multivocalic objects to pose vexing questions: Whose aura (and creative inspiration) is primary or *a priori* in these pieces?

refers to the tumbrel, a cart used to collect plague victims in the 1400s and to convey prisoners to the guillotine during the French Revolution—a gesture to the artist's fate in post-industrial culture. Consequently, *Fingerlift* is an eerie celebration: it contemplates the co-existence of hand with machine, reason with intuition—perhaps even faith.

Each piece in "Re:Pair and Imperfection" honors the artist's hand, just as Slemmons honors other artists' personae (and her own); she has no wish to oversee the death of the craft artist. Reviewer Margaret Hawkins has stated that "Re:Pair and Imperfection" "refers to traditions of artistic collaboration, call and response and the exquisite corpse style of storytelling. One artist sets up an idea and another replies to or completes it."[8] Technically correct, this observation does not address the deepest implications of Slemmons' project, particularly the role her pieces play in undoing the notion of the artist's stable identity. Slemmons herself shows astonishing range as she assimilates her identity to different artists (and theirs to hers). This personal achievement allows her multivocalic objects to pose vexing questions: Whose aura (and creative inspiration) is primary or *a priori* in these pieces? Who is "calling," who "responds," and where precisely do these parties speak from? What is the status of the Maker as a guarantor of these works' authenticity?

Slemmons' multivocalic objects perform the reality that all artists create within a context. Even when artists do not consciously quote each other, they draw from a shared global and historical reservoir of visual references. Acknowledged or not, all artistic production is multivocalic, set in community. The presentation boxes made for "Re:Pair and Imperfection," for example, are covered with handmade grey paper made by Arte Papel Oaxaca, a Mexican factory that is re-establishing the

indigenous paper industry destroyed during the Spanish conquest. In 2000, artist Francisco Toledo invited Slemmons to work with the organization and design a production line of handmade paper jewelry. (They produced the beads included in *Spray*.) The grey paper may seem a neutral backdrop, but it materially represents the reconstruction of community art-making as it ties the exhibition together.

Such bonds set the most basic notion of art's ownership in question. Like the Dadaists, Slemmons has always questioned the extent to which even artists own their art. (She has always refused to sign her work.) Ownership translates into power—to define what art is (and is not), to divide art into accepted genres, and to determine art's meaning and value. Art's freedom is limited even when artists assume this control. In the most radical sense, Slemmons relinquishes the proprietary status artists normally claim. Her hand undeniably shaped these objects; yet she has also taken on the complex role of a relay, one that organizes inspirations from a field of sources and—with great finesse—condenses them into multivocalic forms that constantly refer outward to the context of their production.

Slemmons was recognized as a conceptually driven artist long before this theoretically significant gesture. However her meta-commentary on art production arises from her individual style of working conceptually, particularly her tendency to focus on whole series and exhibitions of work. "Insectopedia" (26 pieces, completed in 1996) and "Hands of the Heroes" (50 pieces, completed in 1993)[9] may be her best-known series. However, another series, begun in 1990, pays homage to historical and vernacular body ornament: the eight (of ten planned) works represent a "collaboration between me and the traditional artist," says Slemmons.[10] At the other end of her spectrum of inspirations, "Cuts and Repose" (21 pieces,

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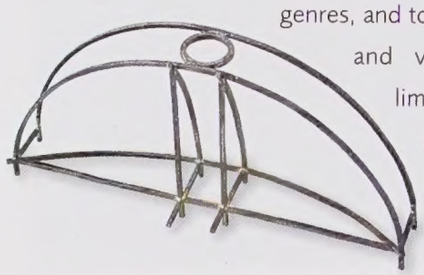
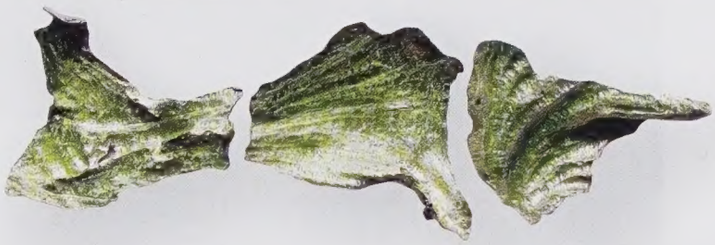


Two Points, One View (re: Joe Wood), 2005
silver, mica, paint
pin: 4 1/2 x 10 x 3/4"

exhibited 1997) explores photo-fragments in jewelry: Slemmons acknowledges Dada artist Hannah Hoch as a significant precursor.

In each of these instances, Slemmons uses a series to "avoid pitfalls of style." The multiple-piece format opens up a "game space" where she can play (perform) with a central idea, developing its nuances and finding means for their concrete expression. This process unfolds through what Slemmons calls her "open ended method," her "invent[ed] ways of making parts of a whole, trying to surround an idea by variations on it."[11] It is not surprising that, while considering how to best exhibit "Re:Pair and Imperfection," Slemmons recalled that Marcel Duchamp once installed a Surrealist show in New York with two miles of thread linking works scattered through several rooms. Visitors pushed through a network of fibers so thick it obscured many of the works. The Dada-inspired strategy would suit Slemmons' exhibition admirably, giving concrete form to the chains of associations and leaps of intellect and imagination that evolve around her central notions.

Take two related elements—the spike and cone—as an arbitrary starting point. *Spray* is a study of the spike form, while *Lisa's Lesson* elaborates on two small cones fabricated by Lisa Gralnick for a metals course. Slemmons made a fastener for one cone and added a third (found) object, a tin candle snuffer with a ring-like handle: She displays the trio as a study of craftsmanship. The form took on a metaphorical dimension when Slemmons fabricated a conical ring as a setting for a Terry Turrell painting, mounting the image on a spring so it would quiver when worn. In the resulting *Megaphone*, it is as if the artist "is speaking through the painting," Slemmons says.[12]



More meaning accrues when she adds two spikes to Joe Wood's constructivist arch, creating *Two Points One View*. Slemmons mounted the piece on a bi-level surface to highlight its imagined function as a connector between differences. This is one of a group of fantasy mechanisms that includes *Rilke's Panther*, a wheeled cage topped by a dented golden ball given by Otto Kunzli, and *Fingerlift*. The mechanisms become more real with *Stopper*, a plugged gun made from plaster casts of a revolver and violin tuning key (the stopper), contributed by Lisa Gralnick. The notion of violence leads to *Warning*, three brooches made from Daniel Jocz's cast silver leaves. Slemmons imbedded spent cartridges in the leaves, inspired by a story (reproduced on the piece's presentation box) in which a Bosnian man describes how he knew the war was getting close because there were "shell casings in the lettuce leaves." The horror of war becomes everyday; two perspectives become one view; two artists conjoin in one object.

Of course one can trace endless links between the works' formal, technical, aesthetic, literary and semantic properties as well as Slemmons' personal connections with her contributors and innumerable other categories. For Slemmons, as such connections grow denser, it is increasingly difficult to locate the borders between specific objects. "After so many years," she says, "it seems like I've worked on only eight or ten full pieces

Warning (re: Daniel Jocz), 2005
silver, steel shell casings
three pins: together 2 1/2 x 8 x 3/4"

Slemmons invites her viewers into a space where closed objects open up—into exploration, into symbiosis and hybridization, into harmonies of voices.

that are composed of hundreds of parts."[13] This is why she defines the entire series (or exhibition)—rather than individual works—as "the object." To differentiate it from the individual works, the exhibition can be referred to as a "macro-object." This macro-object includes all of the exhibition's materials, expanding outward through this specific community of artists and their personal connections. Slemmons may develop a book that includes images from the exhibition as well as her notes, correspondence with contributors and other documents. She wishes to preserve and further expand the macro-object once it is no longer exhibited as a whole.

Bringing together so many sources, this macro-object exists across many different spaces and times, which leads to a second implication: the macro-object can never be completed—a fact Slemmons alludes to in *Lupanar Reliquary*. To house a tiny wolf's head that Keith Lewis carved in wax (to cast in silver), Slemmons chose a form closely associated with Lewis' activist artwork—the penis. The head holds Lewis' fragment, but the testicles function as a second reliquary. The bit of fabric it contains adds visual interest and texture, but Slemmons is well aware of the etymological connections between testes—the biological container of "seed"—and textile and text. Postmodernists focus on this semantic chain because it suggests the endless fertility of meaning in any work of art. (The froth of silver wire emanating from the penis head reinforces this allusion.) A work is not constrained by its physical boundaries because new meanings can always be generated, expanding the semantic fabric—the text—of the work of art infinitely.

The viewer grasps a traditionally conceived art work as a whole, traveling within its unity to discover a complete experience and set of meanings. Slemmons compels us to take a different journey. The stable art object de-materializes, assuming a new form with an intangible quality.[14] No single piece exists in isolation; none has distinct boundaries. Each object continually shifts the focus away from itself to its links with others in the entire series. Each is a point in a process, a site of performance within the macro-object. Note the connections evolving around "relic," which appears in *Fingerlift*, *Lupanar Reliquary* and, most tellingly, in the pair of rings, *Relic/Fault*, which suggests that the fragments themselves are relics. *Lupanar Reliquary* also links to *Monte Alban* through personal connections. Lewis' wax wolf's head reminded Slemmons of the trip the two artists took to Pompeii. *Monte Alban* includes a stone jaguar head, another relic set in another memorial to friendship: the late Ramona Solberg purchased the artifact

Hot Bed (re: Bruce Metcalf), 2006
silver, carved wood, coral
pin: 4 1/2 x 2 1/2 x 1"

when she and Slemmons visited Mexico.

If the artist/maker must re-envision her work's connections, the viewer certainly performs a role in generating meaning. A piece or exhibition floods the viewer with a "density of signs," to use Roland Barthes' phrase for stage performances.[15] In "Re:Pair and Imperfection," the objects, photos of fragments, display boxes and contributed works set the stage for the viewer's critical performance. Slemmons fantasized that visitors might use colored threads to mark the connections they saw in the exhibition, adding new strands to the network with each insight.

The viewer cannot own this work, but s/he can perform within it. Just as many contributors stand behind this macro-object, "it takes many people to own one full piece," as Slemmons says.[16] Avant-garde performance undoes art's commodification by making "objectless" art—intangible expressions that cannot be purchased and horded. Slemmons has made fantasy objects and functionless devices that refer outside of themselves. These performative, multivocalic objects resist classification, "the first step," as cultural historian John D. Erickson notes, "on the way to the liberation of the beholder from functional control...of the...artist himself."[17] Erickson speaks specifically of Dada artists, but the sentiment applies to any attempt to assign an artist control over the reception of his/her work.

Slemmons began her work by laying the fragments out on her studio table, arranging them with any objects that seemed to connect. This, she says, was her "rehearsal." She was fascinated to see how the "fragments changed character when the 'set' changed"—when she re-configured the arrangements. She speculates, quoting Proust, that "perhaps the immobility of the things that surround us is forced upon them...by the immobility of our conception of them." Slemmons invites her viewers into a space where closed objects open up—into exploration, into symbiosis and hybridization, into harmonies of voices. In this space, the viewer has the privilege and freedom to perform art in an ongoing process of making and viewing, of giving voice to meaning—owned by all who come in contact with it, if it can be owned at all.

Tacey A. Rosolowski is a freelance writer who lives in Buffalo, New York.

1 Kiff Slemmons, personal communication, October 2005. Unless otherwise noted, all quotations from the artist are taken from interviews and e-mails dating from September 2005 to September 2006.
2 Video artist Gary Hill quoted in Kiff Slemmons, "An Avant Garden," a lecture delivered in Seattle at the 1998 SNAG annual conference.
3 RoseLee Goldberg, *Performance Art From Futurism to the Present* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2001), p. 7.
4 Slemmons, "An Avant Garden."
5 Letter from Kiff Slemmons to colleagues concerning "Re:Pair and Imperfection," 2004. In *Kiff Slemmons, Re:Pair and Imperfection* (Chicago, IL: City of Chicago Dept of Cultural Affairs, 2006), p. 19.
6 Reported by Kiff Slemmons.
7 See Goldberg, p. 7.
8 Margaret Hawkins, "Kiff Slemmons: *Re:Pair and Imperfection*." Exhibition review in *American Craft* (Oct/Nov '06): 54-57, 55.
9 Mija Riedel discusses this series in, "Uncommon Means of Measure: The Jewelry of Kiff Slemmons," *Metalsmith*, vol. 13, no. 3 (Summer 1993): 24-31.
10 Kiff Slemmons, "Connections." Address to Jewelry Symposium, Massachusetts School of Art; Boston, September 18, 2004.
11 Slemmons, "An Avant Garden."
12 Slemmons, "Re:Pair and Imperfection." Lecture given at the Palo Alto Art Center, December 2, 2006.
13 Slemmons, "An Avant Garden."
14 Henry M. Sayre, *The Object of Performance: The American Avant-Garde since 1970* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1989), p. 16.
15 Roland Barthes, *Critical Essays*, trans. Richard Howard (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1972), pp. 261-2.
16 Slemmons, "An Avant Garden."
17 John D. Erickson, *Dada: Performance, Poetry and Art* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1984), p. iii.

All Photos: Rod Slemmons

Freed Speech (re: Joyce Scott), 2005
brass, mica, glass beads
necklace: 14 x 10 x 1/2"

A Fruitful Patience

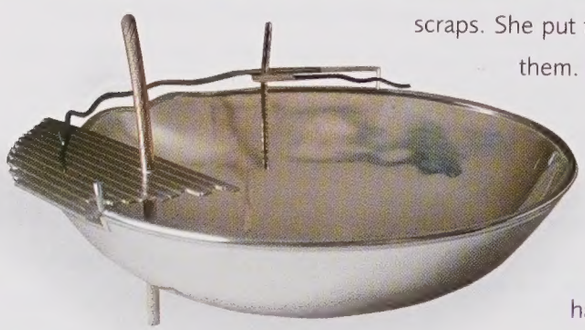
The Work of Kye-yeon Son

by Barbara Isherwood

Kye-yeon Son makes a fine ambassador for Canada. The country's multi-cultural society allows immigrants to celebrate their traditions while embracing North American ways. The work Son has created in the past two decades is a beautiful fusion of the Korean aesthetic with an expressiveness that reflects her North American experience. Son's talent surfaced in the 1960s, during her elementary school years in Seoul. She attributes her artistic sensibility to her mother, Sang Soon Choi. "She has the eye for design, and the patience." In high school Son focused on art, following a grueling schedule in order to gain a place in Korea's national university, where tuition is about one-tenth that of a private school. Her mother woke her at four a.m., believing early morning to be the best time to study. A full day in school was followed by drawing, design and English classes late into the evening. When Son expressed concern about what these extra lessons were costing her family, her father, Young Zo Son, joked that he'd "sell his pants" if necessary. The family's efforts succeeded and Son began work on her BFA in Applied Art and Design at Seoul National University in 1975. In her third year she switched to craft. It was choice by default—she felt she didn't have the competitive personality to succeed as a graphic designer and also believed it would be easier to combine a career in craft with having a family.

The school's approach during Son's time there was influenced by the Bauhaus. "There was big baggage for me, for a long time. Whatever you did, it had to be a functional design." Her first glimpse of other options came through *Craft Horizons* magazine and metalsmith Lizzi Yoo, an instructor at Seoul University who had done earned her MFA at Tyler School of Art in Philadelphia. Yoo gave Son a picture of life outside the then-closed Korean society. "I wanted that experience," says Son. After a year in graduate school in Korea, Son achieved her dream and enrolled in the MFA program at the University of Indiana, Bloomington. While her previous technical training was in sync with the school, content proved a stumbling block. Narrative was "in," and one of her first assignments was to make a self-portrait in metal. "I was stuck," says Son, who, despite her eagerness to be part of the new metals scene, found the concept of self-expression in metal quite foreign. Seeking a way to fit in with the prevailing aesthetic, Son took workshops with Bruce Metcalf—"He was the hot shot in 1981." She recalls being challenged to make an object from a bag of scraps. She put the pieces together into little sculptures and made up a story to go with them. But it didn't feel right. "It was a lie, too easy and predictable."

Some serious soul searching followed. "Is it really me?" Son asked herself. She concluded if it didn't come naturally, it wasn't right. She stopped trying to force content on her work, instead letting it arise of its own accord. Sketches of trees inspired a series of stickpins made from wire, a favorite material that has surfaced throughout her career. "Wire has a character than no other material does; [it's like] thread but with tensile



Waiting and Wading, 1984
sterling silver, nickel-silver, copper, brass, aluminum, niobium
4 x 7 1/4 x 7 1/4 "

Longing, 2005
sterling silver
5 1/8 x 5 1/8 x 18 1/2"
Photo: P. Jackson

This was the genesis of Son's personal aesthetic, a marriage of refined design with personal content that is present in the subtlest of fashions.

strength." Son enjoys working with "basic visual elements," using line for both its abstract and representational qualities.

Her next project was a necklace of copper tubing that referred to her brother, sister and herself. "It could just be viewed as a manipulation of lines," she says. "But since lines have different characters, they can be used as metaphors. I made a personal connection, very secretly, to the work. People don't have to know." This was the genesis of Son's personal aesthetic, a marriage of refined design with personal content that is present in the subtlest of fashions. Son views this is both true to herself and to her heritage. "What is accepted as beauty in Korean society is very much related to Confucianism—to not show off, to be polite, subtle, never push. Unusual but subtle will be accepted slowly, but if it's in your face, it will be rejected as 'not right.'"

The first series in which her vision appears fully realized developed out of her graduate thesis exhibition. She chose to work with the bowl form—which she likens to the painter's canvas—with size and shape chosen as appropriate for each idea. But the traditional flat bottom bothered her. "The complete form is sacrificed by function." Her penchant for wire proved the solution to both her design and content dilemmas. Strips of wire and tubing, vertically piercing the interior or attached to the outside, support the bowl, permitting an unbroken curve that echoes the circular line of the rim and sides. These wire supporters, a motley crew in various colored metals and configurations, can read as abstract lines, and some titles—*Circuitous Line* and *Deviating Line*—enforce this reading. Other titles hint at meaning beyond pure form. *Homecoming*, *Hard To Reach*, *Waiting and Wading*, these point to what was then on the artist's mind; thoughts of family, artist goals, and the unknown future that influenced the shapes she formed. The bowl in *For Waiting*, is held by a single shaft, yet is also supported by an arm that curves around the rim. The lone vertical element seems to look across the expanse of the bowl at a wavy line on the other side, as if surveying a far-off destination.

The title turned out to be prescient, as Son was entering a period of her life during which sustained creative work became a dream for the future. Upon graduation in 1984, Son and her husband Chan Kon Kim, a fellow Indiana graduate, moved to Montréal, where he had been offered a teaching position. They thought that as a large city, Montréal would be a good place to launch Son's career. But Montréal's metals scene was French-speaking and this prevented Son from penetrating both the industry and the studio metalsmithing community. Having been

Hard to Reach, 1986
pewter, copper, niobium slate
6 x 12 x 12"

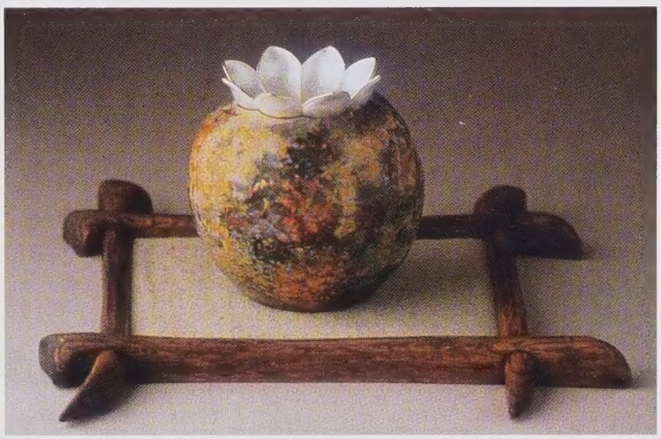
in a school environment non-stop since grade school, then suddenly finding herself without either classes to attend or a job to do left a big void. "I was lost," she admits.

Enter Lois Etherington Betteridge. "Lois saved me," says Son. Betteridge, one of Canada's pre-eminent silversmiths, was living an hour and a half outside of Montréal. They struck an unusual deal—Son had access to a bench in her studio, in exchange for making them both lunch each day! Son would take the bus every morning, arriving around 10:30 a.m. and working until 4:00.

Son learned a lot, and praises both her mentor's generosity and work ethic. "If I'd stop what I was doing while talking, Lois would say 'Keep working, keep working.'" It was through Betteridge that she met fellow metalsmiths Beth Alber (now head of Material Arts and Design at Ontario College of Art and Design in Toronto) and Pamela Ritchie, an instructor at Nova Scotia College of Art and Design (NSCAD) in Halifax.

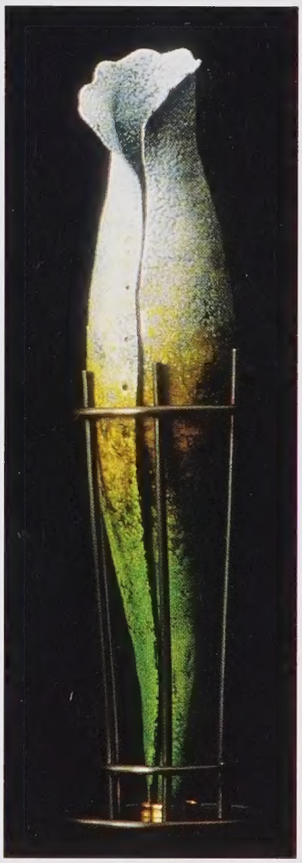
Son and Ritchie became fast friends and in 1986 Ritchie invited Son to NSCAD to teach for a semester. The craving Son had for inspirational dialogue with colleagues was at last sated. She had a solo show at Anna Leonowens Gallery in Halifax and was offered a permanent part-time teaching gig at NSCAD, but felt she couldn't ask her husband to uproot himself for the sake of a part-time job. She returned to Montréal, taught evening courses at the Saidye Bronfman Centre, and continued to show occasionally, often to acclaim. In 1988 she received the Metal Arts Guild's highest award, the Steel Trophy, for a salt and pepper set responding to the theme Architectural Influences. The pair showcases a deft handling of lamination, a technique Son had perfected while at Indiana. But the set no longer impresses its maker. "It doesn't have the depth, in my view. There's no part of myself there."

Despite her growing reputation within Canada's metals field, there was little financial reward. "Compliments get you going when first out of school, but if your career doesn't go any



above
Wishing Stone for Happy Life, 1997
copper, sterling silver, enamel
shibuichi, beach stones
vessel 4 3/4 x 3 1/2 x 2 3/8"
Photo: Isaac Kim

above right
Wishing, 1997
sterling silver, copper, enamel,
sand, wood vessel
4 x 3 7/8 x 3 7/8"
Photo: Isaac Kim

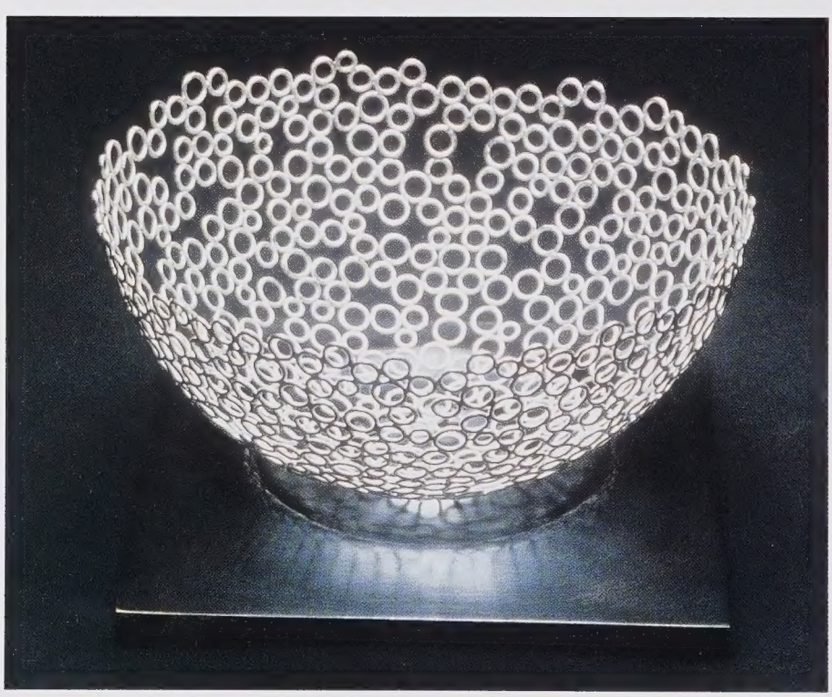


farther, that's discouraging," says Son. Following the births of her daughters Jinnie in 1988 and Eunnie in 1990, her career slowed to a halt. She made no new work, refused a lot of shows and felt terrible about her lack of progress. Lois Betteridge had moved to Guelph so Son was alone again.

Seven years went by before Son's life as an artist resumed. In 1995 Pamela Ritchie invited her to apply for a full-time position at NSCAD. Son was doubtful about her chances—she felt she'd been out of the mix for so long. Her abilities shone through though, and she was selected. Her husband, now a tenured professor at Concordia in Montréal, fully supported her move. He would wait until a suitable job came up in Halifax, then join her. For two and a half years he took care of their young daughters in Montréal. All the money Son earned went toward her bi-monthly trips back home. While Son missed her family terribly, this period proved very fruitful for her artistic development. "I grew a lot, being alone, thinking about family, faith. I had to prove to myself, I can function as an artist again."

The first new body of work to appear was *Wishing Stones*. Son noticed that her students collected pebbles from the beaches around Halifax, on the Atlantic Ocean. "People have a feeling that they're precious, something to hold on to." This brought to mind the stone piles found around the Korean countryside. Her mother would tell her to pick up a stone and put it on top of the pile without knocking the rest over, then make a wish. "At that time I was wishing that my family could join me," says Son.

Artistically the spontaneity of the enameled surfaces was a step forward for Son, as appreciation of the unexpected during the creative process had been hard won—her rigorous technical training had conditioned her to strive for ultimate control of her material.



Her initial idea was to carve into actual beach stones, but she decided that the found object route would not elicit the feeling of preciousness she desired. Instead she fabricated hollow forms of copper, then freely applied enamel to resemble the mottled patterns of timeworn pebbles. This also proved a way around the forbidding "don't touch" aura

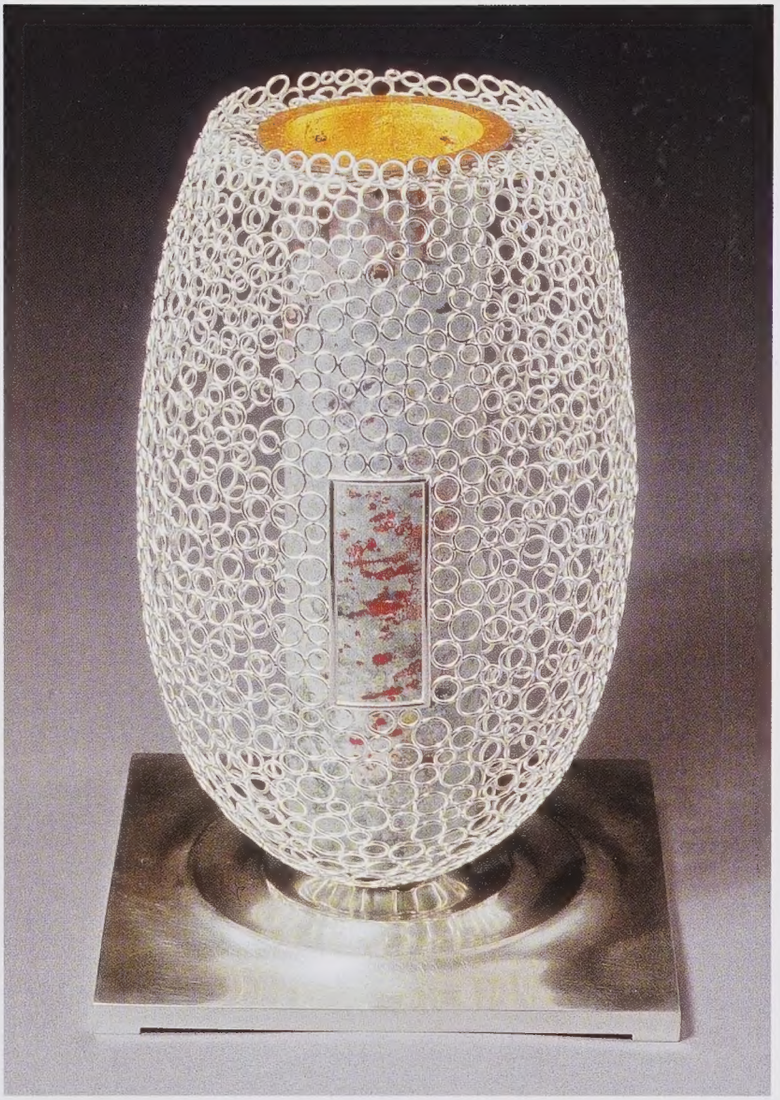
clockwise from top left
Captured, 1998
10 x 2 3/8 x 2 3/8"
copper, enamel, steel, silk
Photo: Isaac Kim

Ring Bound, 1999
copper, enamel, gold plated silver
2 1/2 x 2 1/2 x 10"
Photo: Isaac Kim

Emptiness, 2002
sterling silver, copper
2 3/8 x 4 3/8 x 4 3/8"
Photo: H.S. Sim

of highly polished metal. Each "stone" has an inset lid of silver that can be removed, revealing a cavity in which special items may be stored. Some are incised with traditional Asian symbols, an aspect of Son's heritage that she hadn't paid much attention to during her youth in Korea. "Under the name of modernization, traditional and decorative symbols were considered old hat," says the artist. Once distanced from her roots by time and geography, she recognized their appeal and incorporated ones she felt appropriate, such as Happy Life. Some wishing stones are placed in wooden trays containing sand, recalling traditional Japanese gardens.

The *Wishing Stones* were a success, in several ways. In 1998, Son's deepest wish was granted—her husband accepted a position at Saint Mary's University in Halifax, and her family was re-united. Artistically the spontaneity of the enameled surfaces was a step forward for Son, as appreciation of the unexpected during the creative process had been hard won—her rigorous technical training had conditioned her to strive for ultimate control of her material. "I was always fighting against it," she recalls. With *Wishing Stones* the tightness of her university years began to slip away and happy accidents were gratefully accepted.

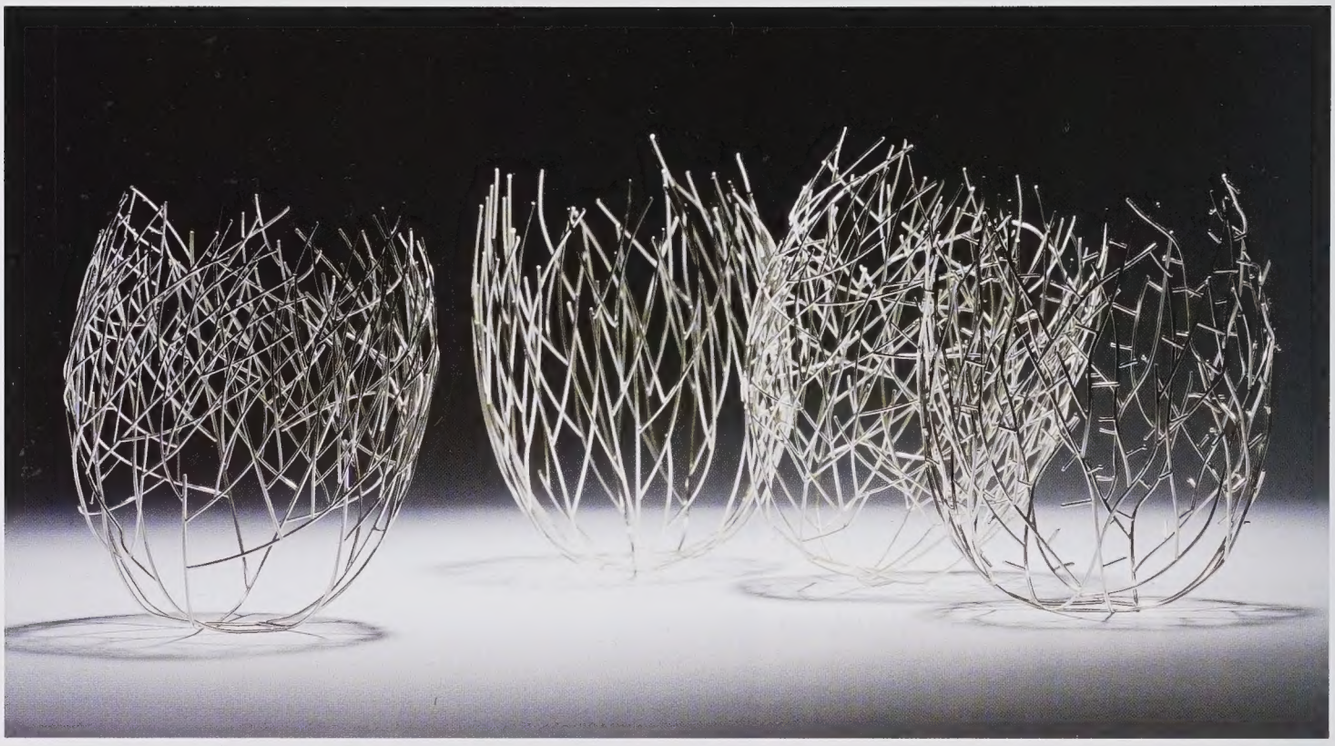


Another body of work in which enameled surfaces evoke the skin of nature arose in response to the frustrating years she'd spent as a housewife. Vessels resembling female forms are suspended in cages of iron and given titles clearly pointing to the restrictions of marriage and motherhood—*Ring Bound*, *House Bound*, *Captured*. In the latter, a tiny mauve pillow under the base of the form reinforces the idea of the suburban house as prison. "It was something I had to get out of my system," says Son. Only the delicately enameled surfaces, in pastels or rich earthtones, relieve the darkness of this vision. *Loss* makes the harshest statement. A seated figure appears slumped over in despair. A cavity within the form's "belly" reveals the internal emptiness that can't be filled by living through others.

This use of space as a signifier is key to the next series, *Empty Vessels*, begun in 2000 following the death of her father. The loss affected Son deeply. Finding that solid vessels could not express her grief, she fashioned *Emptiness*, a vessel of silver jump rings that expresses containment and loss simultaneously. A copper base patinated a deep charcoal shimmers faintly with the reflection of the rings, yet retains a somber aspect suitable to a memorial. In *Fragile Wishes*, a small bowl, lined with keum-boo (the traditional Korean technique of fusing gold on silver) is inset into a larger vessel of rings so it may contain a small object while retaining the aspect of emptiness. The use of gold was inspired by a trip to Thailand, where Son observed the practice of Thai Buddhists, who buy a small square of gold leaf, which they apply to a Buddha image while making a wish or prayer.

Vessel for Memory is a symbolic urn. A window in the outer cage of rings represents the space of where names would appear. The grey enameled surface of the inner vessel recalls a tombstone. Inducing a meditative calm, the piece prompts reflections on the past, present and future.

Vessel for Memory, 2004
sterling silver, copper, enamel
23k gold leaf
9 1/4 x 5 3/4 x 5 3/4"
Photo: H.S. Sim



top
Anticipation, 2006
sterling silver
each 4 3/8 x 3 1/2 x 3 1/2"
Photo: P. Jackson

above
Service for Memory, 2002
sterling silver, marble
wine pot 6 x 4 3/4 x 4 3/8"
Photo: H.S. Sim

Using very thin wires she captured the delicate feeling she observed, twisting the metal into various configurations in response to the moods evoked by various tree types.

The theme of remembrance recurs in *Service for Memory*, a teapot, cup, incense burner, and candleholders fashioned for a family ritual honoring deceased ancestors. Son took pleasure in crafting a utilitarian object that combined design skills and precision metalsmithing with her love of symbolism and need for a personal connection to the work. Her father passed away as a Catholic, so she placed a marble cross on the teapot's lid. Beneath it lies a Buddhist symbol, representing the fusion of faiths in Korea. Each element in the service has a round body that tapers to a square rim, a clever twist indicative of the artist's sophisticated design sensibility. Son believes such ceremonial objects are the best place to use broad expanses of polished silver, which proves too impractical for articles of everyday use.

A chance remark sparked Son's current series. While in Halifax on a visit, her mother pointed to the bare branches of winter and said, "Trees look like they're dead but they always come back." Son began studying those branches she'd been driving past for years. "They're waiting for something, resilient, patient...." A new series of vessels emerged. Using very thin wires she captured the delicate feeling she observed, twisting the metal into configurations in response to the moods evoked by various tree types. A set of four bowls called *Anticipation* brings to mind a walk in the Canadian woods in March, while *Longing* suggests a lone poplar on a hill, waiting for spring's return.

Calming, 2006
sterling silver, gold-filled wire, gold plated
4 3/4 x 18 x 5 1/8"
Photo: P. Jackson

From silver she moved to copper and other colored wires. In *Calming*, sprigs of gold-plated wire flash like the setting sun seen through the autumn forest. The challenges presented by joining stainless steel wires led to Canada Council-funded research into alternative soldering methods. She investigated laser welding in Pforzheim, Germany, but in the end opted for a PUK electro-welder, used primarily by industry, but sufficiently small and affordable enough to be used in an artist's studio. After much trial and error, Son mastered the machine and finds it has expanded her formal repertoire in wire. Whereas a copper wire form soldered at so many points would come unstuck in an enameling furnace, welded wires will hold. So now colorful enameled wire forms are emerging, resembling snowflakes and tiny branches spotted with green buds. Niobium and titanium are next on the list of wires to explore.

Son credits her teaching income with giving her the freedom to experiment and create without worrying about market concerns. "Selling is not my goal," says Son, who believes that part of a teacher's responsibility is to push artistic boundaries. Her most recent solo show was in Gallery Ssamzie in Seoul, Korea, in July 2006. Representation in a U.S. gallery is of interest, but only if the fit is right. Son knows from experience that waiting pays off, and like the branches that inspire her, she is patient and resilient—qualities that will take her a long way still.

Barbara Isherwood is a Toronto-based writer on visual arts and culture.

Marvin Jensen

In a Forest of Questions

by Kate Dobbs Ariail

American artist Marvin Jensen has always done exactly what he wants. "I'm not approaching my career correctly," he says dryly. "You're supposed to take one thing and beat it to death so people will know what you do." But Jensen is by nature an explorer, a "What-if-I-do-*this*?" kind of artist.

The extraordinary objects that Jensen has made as a master craftsman in several techniques and multiple materials are testament to this restlessness. Take the somewhat frightening machine that lay gleaming among the working diagrams and spare parts in his overflowing studio in Penland, North Carolina, one misty August day. Forgetting that I was at the epicenter of the authentic, initially I took this contraption to be a deadpan artistic comment on the strange high-tech machinery of contemporary life. This sleek thing was gorgeous in all its parts and in its entirety. Its adjustable stainless steel thumbscrews were radiant against the calm blue glow of anodized aluminum, which shone against the magisterial and elegantly curved black base.

But it turned out that there was no irony here. Called a stereotaxic device, it is indeed a piece of precision, high-tech research equipment—made aesthetically electric by the integrity of every design decision. Jensen makes one or two such things a year for medical research companies. "It's good money," he says simply. "You have to use your craft to the best advantage."

It's deeply revealing of Jensen's character that he doesn't distinguish between devising a piece of research equipment to be seen by only a few people in a lab and creating a work that may be seen in an art museum, or crafting a set of stairs—or a custom motorcycle body. "I see the continuity," he says. "You just use the proper material for what you want to make." The objects are united by the completeness of their conception and fabrication, by their adamant simplicity, their finality and their superior finish—almost shockingly contrary to today's dominant trend, in which art is left ambiguous to be completed by the viewer. But "a true craftsman thinks it all the way through," says Jensen.

Stereotax, 2004
anodized aluminum, stainless steel
5 x 3 x 2 3/4"

Marvin Jensen was born in 1945 in Mitchell County, Iowa, in the state's northern tier along the Minnesota border. He grew up on his family's farm, where, he says, "we made stuff." His dad, like many farmers, could make almost anything that was needed, including his own small crop-duster airplane. He taught the two boys and two girls

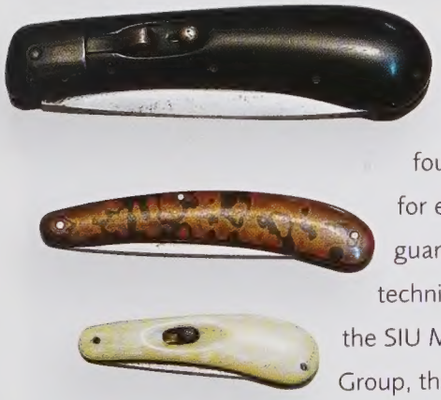
Stools, 2006
curly maple, stainless steel, anodized aluminum, urethane finish
36 x 15 x 13"
Photo: Ken Pitts

top
Interior Structure, 1991
copper, shibuichi, kuromido, shakudo, anodized aluminum
4 1/2 x 9 3/8"
Collection Mint Museum of Craft + Design, Charlotte, North Carolina

above
Bowl, 2004
makume gane
10 x 8 1/2 x 8 1/2"

to do much more than repair things with baling wire and duct tape: they made their own fun, building go-carts and hot-rods. Most importantly, they learned to imagine, to think through process, and discover the nature of materials.

Deciding to study chemistry and engineering, Jensen enrolled at Mankato State University in Minnesota, after earning an associate degree in chemistry from a nearby junior college. But he soon switched to an art major, concentrating in metals and sculpture. (His chemistry background would serve his interest in colored metals and mixed materials well, however.) Jensen then earned his MFA degree in metalsmithing under renowned teacher Brent Kington at Southern Illinois University, where he became involved in rediscovering, researching and refining the nearly-lost Japanese technique of *mokume gane*, or wood-grain metal. This variant of the Damascus steel-making process fuses layers of copper alloys and precious metals to create the working material, or billet. Japanese metalsmiths of the Samurai era had found it a worthy material for elegantly worked sword guards and hilts. Since the technique's reintroduction by the SIU Mokume Gane Research Group, these luxurious laminated metals have been used for jewelry, knife-making and holloware, including Jensen's remarkable pieces.



Fresh from graduate school, in 1980 Jensen went to the Penland School of Crafts in Mitchell County, North Carolina. He went to teach the 8-week intensives in metals, and—like many other artisans who've fallen to Penland's spell—"pretty much never left," although he did spend two years teaching at Purdue University in Indiana. Jensen taught regularly at the school throughout the 1980s and 1990s, eventually directing the metals and sculpture programs. He still teaches occasionally and gives workshops. After "living in about every house on the place" at the school, Jensen and his wife Kathryn Gremley, a weaver and director of the Penland gallery, built a clean-lined house and studio on a nearby ridge in 1995.

Jensen tells a story about a teaching experience that reveals a key to the way he thinks. "One time I was teaching a sculpture class up here at Penland, and there was a woman who just couldn't get it—we were trying to make forms out of sheet metal—and I couldn't quite figure out what she needed." So he sat down with her and picked up her work and started talking it through, asking himself questions. "She turned to me with this amazed look, and said: 'You ask yourself *questions*?'" The questioning is so basic and continuous in him that he hadn't thought to explain the design process as a questioning conversation with yourself.

Penland School in the 1980s and early 1990s was smaller and looser than it is now, and quieter, especially in the fall and spring. The school remains a very good place for asking questions and doing exacting things that take a long time. It would have been the perfect place and time for the labor-intensive craft of *mokume-gane* as practiced by an artist with a laser eye for pure line and unblemished form. During this period, Jensen produced some stunning raised vessels, such as the eight-inch diameter piece from 1989 in the collection of the Museum of Art at the Rhode Island School of Design, and the slightly larger 1991 *Interior Structure*, now owned by the Mint Museum of Craft and Design. The latter is particularly successful as a sculptural form, seeming to hover above the surface beneath it. Jensen's control of the "wood-grain," too, is more evolved here, musical in its rhythmic design, with a contrasting dark edge around the mouth like the strong note of a gong. Looking down into the piece, however, the viewer finds a strange ribbed cylinder crouching within, and a deep rumble joins all the blissful aesthetic harmonies of the exterior. The piece is startling and puzzling, its impact out of all proportion to its size.

Looking down into the piece, however, the viewer finds a strange ribbed cylinder crouching within, and a deep rumble joins all the blissful aesthetic harmonies of the exterior.

But merely perfecting his *mokume-gane* skills was not enough for Jensen. He still had more questions. Long before

Knives, 1978
switchblade, 7 1/2 x 1 x 1"
folding knife, 4 x 1"
switchblade knife,
2 1/2 x 1 x 1/2"
Photo: Dana Moore

he'd ever heard of *mokume*, he had been making motorcycle bodies: sleek, beautiful forms decorated with flowing patterns. In fact, he had chopped a Harley as a project for an undergraduate sculpture class. That gave rise to his "hobby horse" series, made with resin composite skins over steel tubing armatures. "A big part of my work is playing with techniques and materials borrowed from hot rods, or airplanes, or motorcycles," says Jensen, explaining these animated pieces.

Two of the best of these hobby horses are in the form of biplanes (both now in private collections). Besides their thrillingly aerodynamic lines and captivating seats and footpegs, they demonstrate that, for Jensen, a series may take a very long time to complete. *Give Me Wings* was completed in 1984; *Norval's Sacrifice* was not made until 2003. Both were exhibited that year in the North Carolina Museum of Art's "Defying Gravity: Contemporary Art and Flight."

During the 1980s Jensen was also experimenting with widening his color range in anodized aluminum.[1] In addition, he developed a resist method that produced a striated effect, which came to be known as "Penland marble." When he ceased teaching regularly, Jensen began making anodized aluminum lamps and mixed wood and metal stools, benches and tables. His interest in restrained patterning, which had been apparent in the *mokume*, appeared in a more linear form in some of the furnishings, and while some pieces retained a reserved palette, others were wild with color, whether anodized or lacquered. Other pieces, especially the stools, carried on the animated postures of the hobby horses. An architectural project shows Jensen's deep understanding of all three materials. A passionate art collector built a cabin in the Penland area, using old logs recycled from other cabins. She commissioned Jensen to create a staircase up to the open second floor. Made entirely of stainless steel and anodized rod, it is like a strong silken spider web in contrast to the old logs of the unplastered walls. The design is ultra-modern and the parts all machined, bearing no marks of the hand. Yet it harmonizes with the rough textures and hand-hewn materials around it; the little spots of colored aluminum patterning the stair treads suggest flowers in the grass, light glinting on the river, or other such pleasant images as one might enjoy around a mountain cabin.

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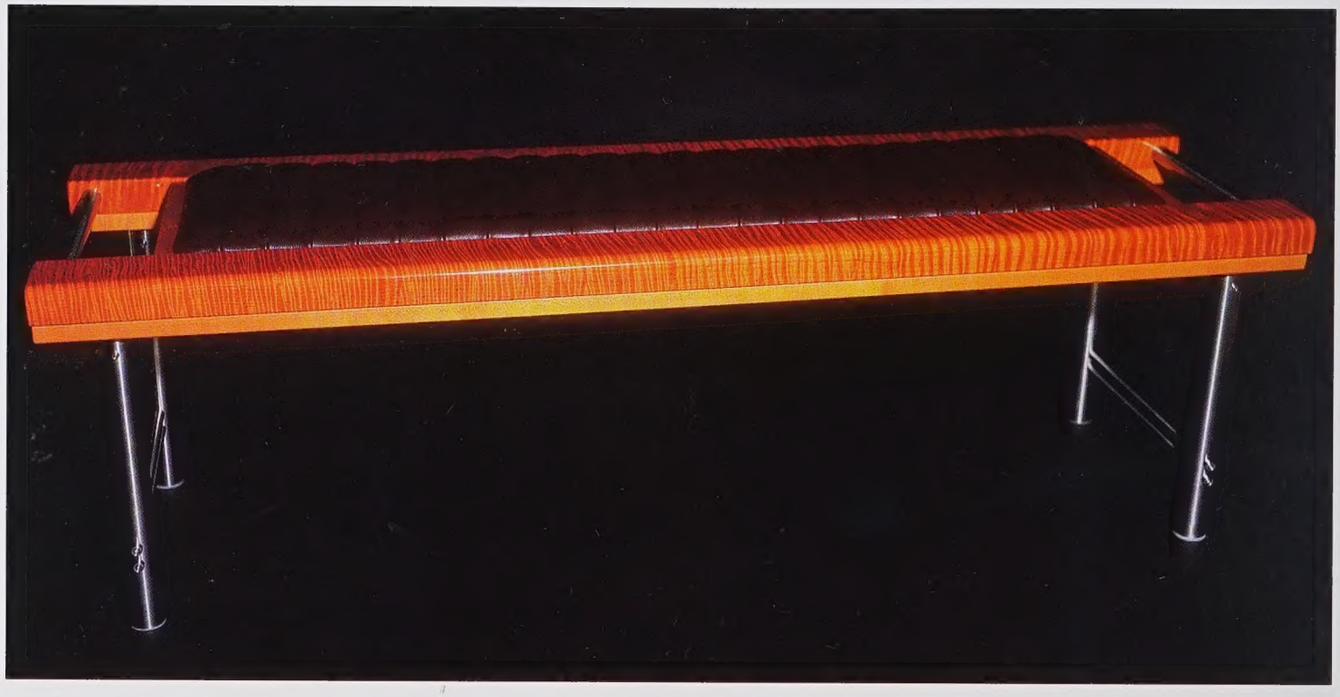
It is the questions arising from his mixed materials that interest Jensen the most now. He has not stopped making *mokume* vessels (a bold recent example was featured in the Shining Wave Metals website gallery this past year). He just has other things on his mind. Right now he is concentrating on building a new, larger studio next to the house with more room for his milling machine, lathe and saws, and his small herd of motorcycles.

Most artists who have worked consistently for as long as Jensen are identified with a specific style of work—a single "look" in certain materials. Since Jensen has not been content with one material or technique, his body of work wears several guises, but all are supported by the same armature of superlative craftsmanship in service of pure line and rich color.

Cocktail Table, 1988
anodized aluminum, glass
20 x 20 x 20"

Give Me Wings, from "Hobby Horse" series, 1984
steel, composites, lacquer, leather
33 x 36 x 42"

My T-33, from "Hobby Horse" series, 1984
steel, composites, lacquer, leather
29 x 18 x 46"



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"For years," he says, "if you didn't do the same thing over and over, and you applied for something, they said, 'he's floundering.'" If Jensen has floundered, he's managed to do it in such a way that he's flopped right into his own version of paradise. He's living near—but not too near—like-minded people in some of the prettiest country that ever was. That it happens to be great motorcycle-riding territory is a fine thing, for while other interests have waxed and waned, the passion for motorcycles persists, specifically Italian racing bikes—"It used to be Harleys," he says, "but here in the mountains you need something that handles"—which he rides with fellow sculptor Hoss Haley.

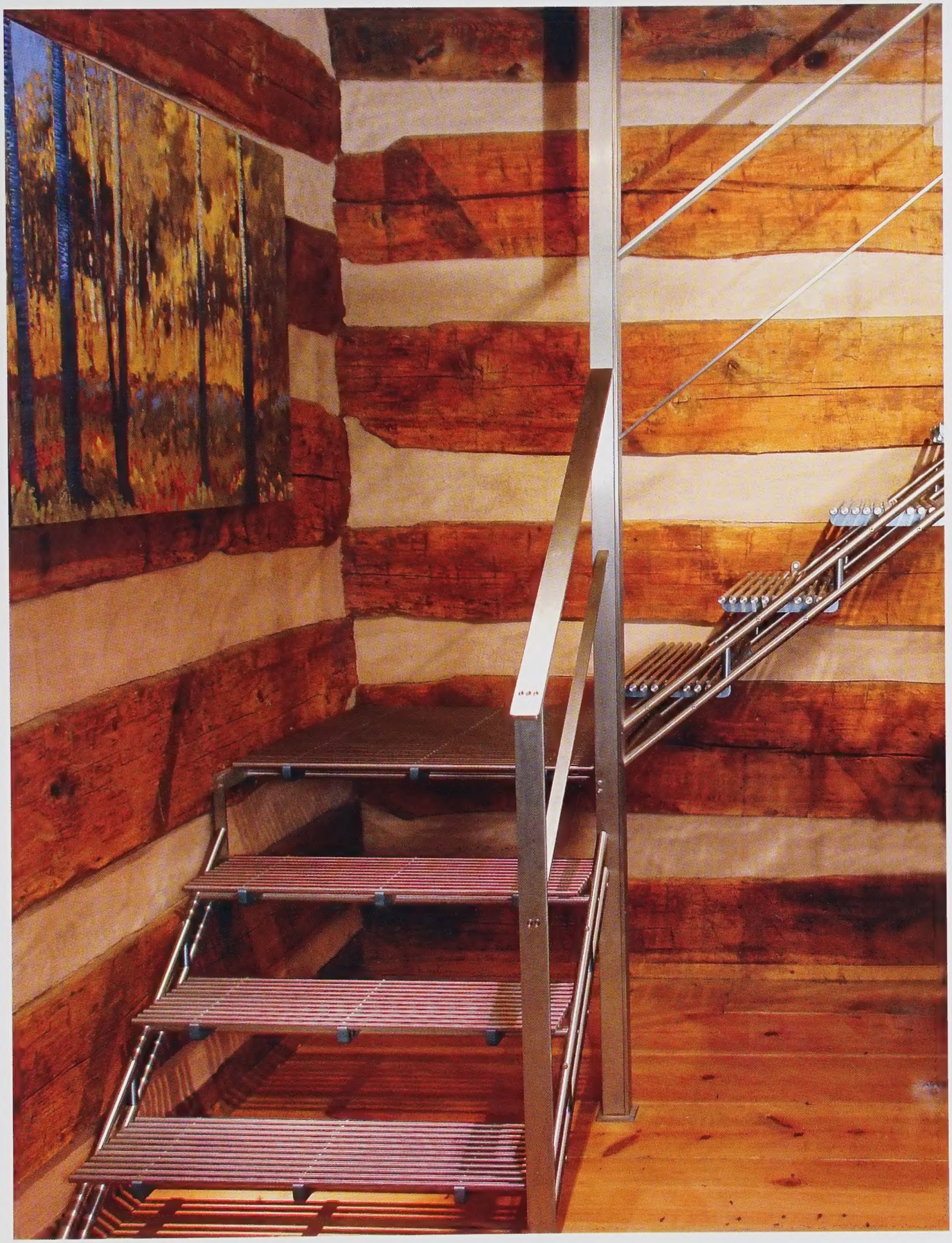
"The new studio will have a huge spray booth," he says happily. "I'm going to start doing more furniture things, combinations of wood and metal." Asked about goals for the future, Jensen begins to say: "I just keep plodding along..." but his voice changes suddenly. "I do want to do some neon at some point. And I want to do some hollow formed pieces with the English wheel. Maybe start with some big bronze cauldrons, rivet the panels together." Clearly, an entire forest of questions has sprung up, and not one of them is going to get answered in that fine new spray booth. ∎

Kate Dobbs Ariail is a cultural critic residing in Durham, North Carolina.

[1] See *Metalsmith*, vol 6, Fall 1986, pp. 32-5.

above
Bench, 1997
wood, metal
22 x 20 x 72"

left
Rings, 2006
stainless steel
Photo: Dana Moore



Staircase, 1999
stainless steel, anodized aluminum
8 x 6 x 12'
Photo: Dana Moore

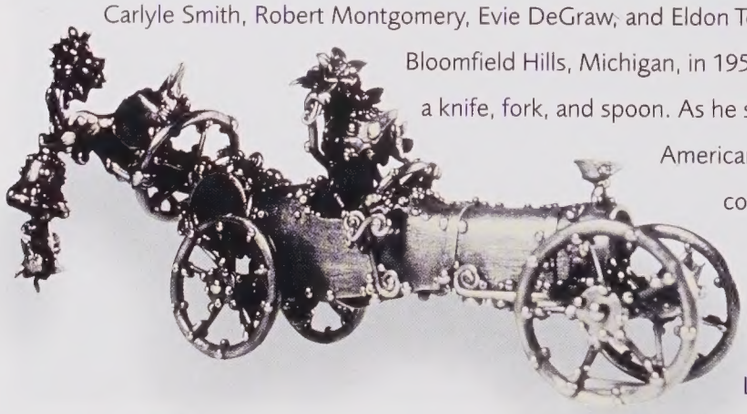
Brent Kington

Expression and Myth

by Matthew Kangas

Brent Kington is such a central figure in mid-twentieth-century American craft that it is surprising how little critical attention his work has garnered. Based in the Midwest, Kington is the founder of the metals program at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale. The M.F.A. program expanded in 2002 and the new building was named after Kington as was a tenured chair. Could that be why Kington's own art may not be on the same visibility level as that of another Midwesterner, David Smith? Like Smith, he has used forged metal to mold expression and myth, yet he has chosen to create his art in between and around teaching responsibilities. His years of devoted pedagogical struggle carving out an academic program may have eclipsed his own career.

After an idyllic childhood in Topeka, Kansas and with plenty of encouragement for his artistic inclinations from teachers and family, Kington attended Kansas University with fellow classmate, the legendary furniture sculptor Wendell Castle. Teachers like Carlyle Smith, Robert Montgomery, Evie DeGraw, and Eldon Teft helped Kington get into Cranbrook Academy of Art in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, in 1959. He had his first metal-forging experience there making a knife, fork, and spoon. As he stated in a 2001 interview for the Smithsonian Archives of American Art interview: "Taking raw materials and an idea and controlling it start to finish is controlling your life."[1]



A-Way-We-Go, 1967
sterling silver
5 x 12 x 3 1/2"
Photo: SIU Photographic Services

Early private commissions, friendships with influential dealers and collectors, the toast of the "Young Americans" shows, and a fluke job offer from Raymond Loewy Associates all led him back to the Midwest of his

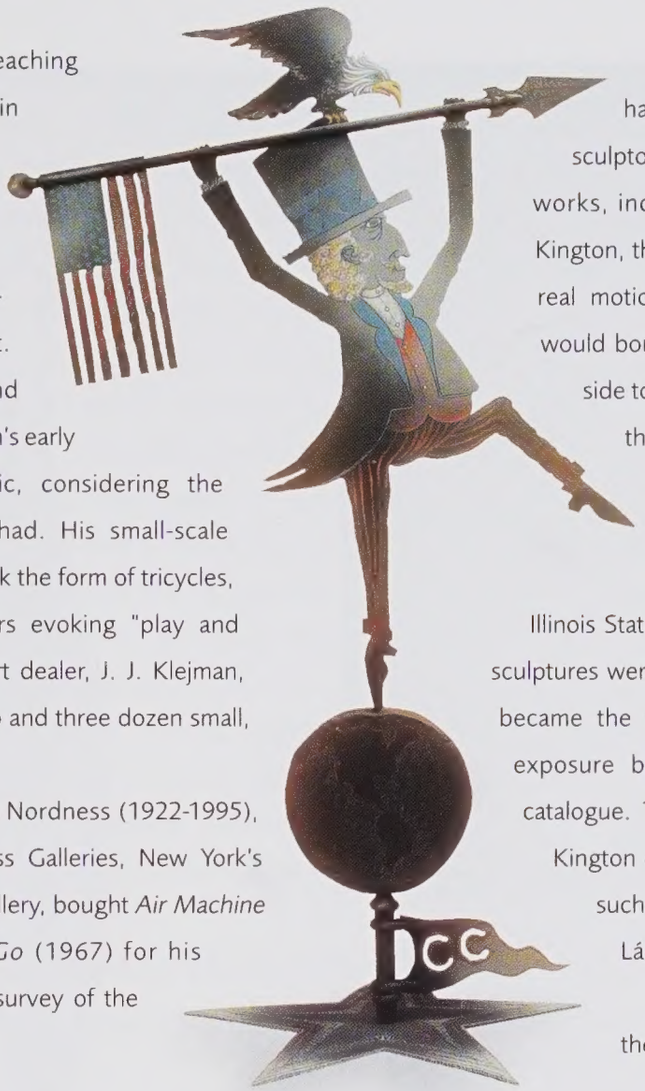
Icarus, 1983
polychromed mild steel
42 x 10 x 18"
Photo: Myers Walker

Weathervane #1, 1978
forged mild steel
40 1/2 x 56 1/2 x 12"
Photo: Myers Walker

left
Weathervane Brooch, 1980
forged 14k and 18k gold
4 1/4 x 1 1/4 x 5/16"
Photo: Dan Overturf

youth for his lifetime teaching position at SIU, offered in 1961 without even the necessity of an interview. Soon exhibiting in nationally competitive, craft-specific exhibitions in St. Paul, Wichita, Detroit, and New York, Professor Kington's early years were highly prolific, considering the workload he must have had. His small-scale sterling silver sculptures took the form of tricycles, airplanes, and railroad cars evoking "play and whimsy." One New York art dealer, J. J. Klejman, commissioned between two and three dozen small, hand-held birds of silver.

Then, Seattle-native Lee Nordness (1922-1995), director/owner of Nordness Galleries, New York's first contemporary crafts gallery, bought *Air Machine* (1969) and *A-Way-We-Go* (1967) for his "Objects: USA," a touring survey of the state of American craft.



weathervanes in New York in 1971 had a huge impact on the 37-year-old sculptor. It later led to some of his greatest works, including *Weathervane #1* (1978). To Kington, the weathervanes "implied motion and real motion. . .[They] not only rotated; they would bounce back and forth. . .and rock from side to side." In these works Kington echoed the growing kinetic sculpture movement of the 1970s that included Alexander Calder, George Rickey, Kenneth Snelson, among others. In the 1980 Illinois State Museum retrospective, eight kinetic sculptures were shown and one, *Untitled #3* (1979), became the focus of three strobe-lit, extended-exposure black-and-white photographs in the catalogue. Their energy and movement pushed Kington closer to Constructivist predecessors, such as Antoine Pevsner, Naum Gabo, and László Moholy-Nagy.

On a completely different note, during the National Bicentennial, two important

To Kington, the weathervanes "implied motion and real motion. . .[They] not only rotated; they would bounce back and forth. . .and rock from side to side."

Gradually, however, he tired of smaller-scale metals such as silver and apprenticed himself part-time to two African-American blacksmiths, the Deal brothers, who had a forge in nearby Murphysboro, Tennessee. Between 1964 and 1969, Kington was devoting one week each month to forging. In 1968, when *Angel Brooch* was made, he made a "full commitment to ferrous metals: "I made up my mind that by the end of December 1969, I would stop making any silver pieces. . . . I had to devote myself to something which was literally like going back to graduate school. I took trade-school welding courses. I didn't know what arc welding was."

Viewing an American Folk Art Museum exhibition of political works, *Lady Liberty* and *Uncle Sam* (both 1976), took the form of elaborately painted weathervanes. *Lady Liberty* stands astride a disc above a pennant with the Roman numerals "C C," (as in "200"). The 13-star flag has its white stripes missing, Kington's commentary on the dangers of the Watergate-Vietnam War era. With both works alluding to the Revolutionary War period, *Lady Liberty*, especially, trades on the tales of radical women during the War. *Uncle Sam* is equally precarious, standing tiptoe above a disc. Holding aloft another flag with missing stripes, the top-hatted, bearded figure is watched over by a protective bald eagle. They were acquired by a South Carolina collector who, over the years, kept

Uncle Sam, 1976
mild steel, oil-based paints
72 x 36 x 18"
Photo: SIU Photographic Services

pressuring Kington to repaint them. Failing to persuade him because, against Kington's wishes, they were not displayed indoors, the collector eventually had the original, fading paint job stripped and replaced by another, local artist.

The "Icarus" series followed in the 1980s. These works were the last of Kington's openly figurative works. Related to the *Air Machines* in that the Greek mythological figure of Icarus flew too near the sun and fell wearing his wings fashioned of wax, also a symbol of man's yearning for flight. Commenting to Douglas about the series, Kington alluded to Native American Art, Northwest Coast Native Art, Inuit Art and aboriginal face paintings as inspirations, and noted: "I'm referring to the persistence of tribal early man and his persistent dream of flight." With *Crosier* (1990), *Europa* (1990), *Crescent* (2000), and *Spire* (2003)—all part of a continuing series—Kington shifted dramatically toward explorations of thin, upright forged mild-steel forms that often rest on hemispherical oak bases.

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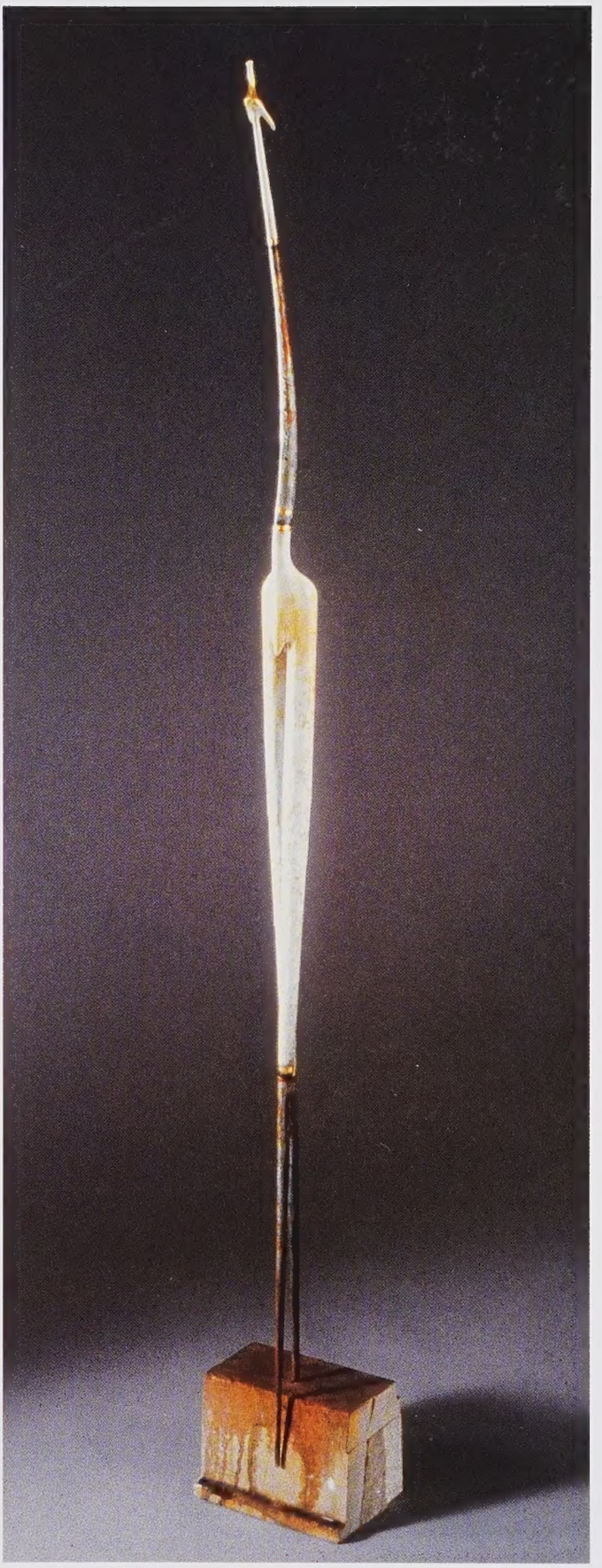
Attaining full individuality and maturity, these works are among the 72-year-old artist's most distinctive achievements and have come to be seen as signature sculptures. Defying expectations of bulk, mass or volume in forged steel art, Kington took the ascending character of the "Icarus" sculptures one step farther, positioning the objects as if for literal aerial take-off. The gilt and polychromed upper area of *Crosier* adds a sacralized note to the abstracted bishop's crook. The antennae or wings of *Icarus* are echoed, but as outstretched arms reaching heavenward in *Europa*. *Crescent* balances its tapered vertical shaft with a horizontal, crescent-like curve above. Plainest of all, but most sublime, *Spire* continues the religious allusions common to this period, adding a thin steel point at the top, it suggests both cathedral spire and electronic antenna.

top
Brooch, 1988
14k, 18k and 24k gold,
mokume gane pattern steel
diameter 3 1/2"
Photo: Dan Overturf

above
Angel Brooch, 1968
steel, 14k gold
diameter 2 3/4"
Photo: SIU Photographic Services

Europa, 1990
forged mild steel
120 x 7 x 7"
Private collection, Miami, Florida
Photo: Jeff Bruce



Crosier, 1990
polychromed steel
68 x 8 1/2 x 6"
Shawnee City Library
Collection, Topeka, Kansas

Spire, 2003
forged mild steel, oak
74 x 11 x 11"
Photo: Jeff Bruce

As director of the School of Art and Design at SIU, Carbondale, Kington's hands were perhaps more often full of papers than pliers. He is a good example of how the close-knit American craft community of academically trained, university faculty members managed their own careers and, in turn, a national crafts culture. Dominated by their medium-specific members' groups and their annual meetings, many of the teachers turned their backs on the art world, ignoring fine arts institutions and art galleries, and taking advantage of widespread networks of insider-jury competitive shows. Not publish or perish, but exhibit—anywhere—or be refused promotion and tenure seemed to be the directive.

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Kington's work as a founder of the Society of North American Goldsmiths in 1968 was followed by his assistance in the formation of ABANA in 1972 in Lumpkin, Georgia, and his ascension to the American Craft Council Board of Trustees in 1976. Add to all those jobs his overseeing of the new Mokume Gane Research Workshop at SIU in 1978 and it is all the more impressive what Kington accomplished in the studio. Sources as diverse as agriculture, Greek mythology, indigenous art, and Constructivism have come together in a 45-year span to create the art of Brent Kington. By retrieving and perfecting older forge and foundry techniques and making them accessible to artists and designers, he has revealed successive directions for his own art and that of countless other students, colleagues, and admirers in the United States and abroad. ◘

Matthew Kangas, a Seattle-based art critic, is the author of the recently published *Craft and Concept: The Rematerialization of the Art Object*.

[1] This and subsequent quotes from the artist are from a tape-recorded interview with L. Brent Kington on May 3 and 4, 2001. The interview took place at the artist's home and studio in Makanda, Illinois, and was conducted by Mary Douglas for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, as part of the Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America. The transcript is available on line at: http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/oralhistories/transcripts/kingto01.htm.

Crescent, 2000
forged mild steel, oak
43 x 23 x 8"
Photo: Jeff Bruce

REVIEWS

"SERGEY JIVETIN: NEW WORKS"
ORNAMENTUM GALLERY,
HUDSON, NEW YORK
AUGUST 17 – SEPTEMBER 10, 2006

by URSULA ILSE NEUMAN

Sergey Jivetin first gained international recognition in 2005 when his series of brooches and rings made of thousands of delicate watch hands won the prestigious Herbert Hoffman prize at the Munich Schmuck exhibition. This 27-year-old, Russian-born artist demonstrated the same technical prowess and artistic intensity in his latest series, "Lineare," presented at the Ornamentum Gallery. In his new work, Jivetin took on the challenge of creating jewelry using wire made of Nitinol—a nickel-titanium alloy twice as strong as steel and 100 times as flexible—and steel tubes sliced from hypodermic syringes. The result is a visually arresting and technically dazzling display that confirms the promise Jivetin has shown since immigrating to the United States from Uzbekistan in 1992.

A graduate of the Parsons School of Design (BFA) and SUNY New Paltz (MFA), Jivetin has always been strongly attracted to testing the properties of different metals and developing special techniques to express his ideas. As an independent studio artist, he operates at the intersection of art and design, applying his experience in product design, engineering, and illustration from Russia and the United States to art jewelry. Integrating a broad range of disciplines and formats, he works in series, exploring specific materials, methods, and forms in each one. The current "Lineare" group extends his mastery of intricate and innovative construction to serve his poetic vision and his devotion to designing for the human body.

"Lineare" is aptly named because these works capture the subtlety of fine line drawings, an association uniting them with the traditions of etching, decorative arts and jewelry, particularly the black filigree of nineteenth-century cast-iron jewelry from Berlin. In the Ornamentum Gallery, the pieces were pinned to a black-and-white mural drawn by Jivetin from an antique dry-point etching, which allowed them to be appreciated in their own right apart from their role as adornment. Placing the solid objects on two-dimensional patterns also prompted a deliberate confusion between flatness and volume, a visual game that Jivetin played to perfection. The ambiguity is dramatically resolved when you hold a piece in the palm of your hand—far from being fragile or delicate, it possesses an unexpected strength that changes your perception and enhances your appreciation of its vitality and workmanship.

Jivetin intentionally limits his palette to natural metallic shadings—from blue-black to oxidized silver-black—that maintain the characteristics of his materials. While cutting-edge materials are central to "Lineare," Jivetin humanizes them and even adds a bit of whimsy with familiar silhouettes from the decorative arts and architecture, like a vase (*Shaded Vase Brooch*), a classical Greek architectural ornament (*Ionic Order Brooch*) or a cupola from his native Uzbekistan (*Cupola #5 Brooch*). Then he fills the silhouettes with linear shadings and shadows, compiled from thin metal components. The fragmented motifs link his designs to a long history of decorative art, and yet are sufficiently understated to require a second look before you notice the relationships.

In more abstract pieces, such as the *3 Legged Form Necklace*, he exploits the remarkable physical properties of Nitinol which springs back to its assigned original position however you might bend or twist the necklace's slender wires. In the striking *Torus Bracelet*, Jivetin employs Nitinol's deceptive strength to further advantage, assembling curving lines that seem to float in space, but are structurally as sound as a self-anchored suspension bridge. Jivetin's sensitivity to his unorthodox medium is also evident in a pair of coiled earrings (*Cone Earrings*), reminiscent of Calder's mobiles and the spirals found in much of his jewelry.

To create the "Lineare" series, Jivetin worked under high magnification, drilling thousands of minute perforations in the syringe tubes through which the ethereal wire is threaded to hold each piece together and form the individual "pencil lines." Beyond this impressive technical achievement, what distinguishes Jivetin's work is his insightful and unconventional thinking. In "Lineare," Jivetin focuses on what he sees as the contradictory nature of high-technology materials. While inherently alien to the human body, they can be subverted into forms that compliment and perfect it. In a less thoughtful and talented artist, these clever manipulations of metal might remain sterile curiosities, but Jivetin's pieces have compositional integrity and a strong physical presence. Incorporating the worlds of industrial design, art and decorative art, Jivetin reflects a 21st-century pluralism that defies any pigeonhole. Recognizing the conflict between the mechanical and the organic, he devises contemporary body ornaments full of appealing visual and contextual contrasts—edgy and abstract but with familiar historical images, high-tech and precise but quirky with the mark of the artist's hand. Jivetin's future excursions will be exhilarating to follow.

Ursula Ilse-Neuman is a curator at the Museum of Arts & Design, New York.

clockwise from top left
Cupola #5, 2006
Nitinol, hypodermic needles
4 1/2 x 1 1/2 x 1/4"

Three-Legged Form Necklace, 2006
Nitinol, syringe needles
24 x 8 x 1/16"

Cone Earrings, 2006
Nitinol, syringe needles
4 x 1 x 1/2"

"WILLIAM BARAN-MICKLE: BUSY LIVES"
GALERY FRAGA, WINSLOW, WASHINGTON
OCTOBER 6 – 28, 2006

by MATTHEW KANGAS

Where does the dividing line between ornament and sculpture lie? Or between jewelry and sculpture? Does the incorporation of conceptual content (claimed invariably in artist's statements or, worse, in review-like commentaries on their own works) guarantee fine art or sculptural status? The art of William Baran-Mickle answers some of these questions in interesting ways.

In a recent exhibition at Gallery Fraga on Bainbridge Island near Seattle, Baran-Mickle exhibited a series of small-scale mixed-metal pedestal sculptures and wall-mounted reliefs. Revolving around the theme of "Busy Lives," the survey confirmed the 50-year-old graduate of California College of the Arts, Rochester Institute of Technology and Syracuse University (where he received a graduate degree in art history) and drew upon a variety of processes and materials to illustrate themes of leisure time, domestic stability and architectural interiors.

Having lived on the West Coast since 1998, Baran-Mickle has picked up a bit of California or Pacific Northwest Funk Art influences: puns, illusionism, representational imagery and homely subject matter. The results are wryly amusing. The coffee culture of Seattle is a major satirical target. In *Family Portrait*, two oversize, lidded Styrofoam beverage containers are meticulously rendered in painted metal. One cup has tipped with a thick brown liquid oozing on the side of the supporting stack of brass file folders. *Chronology of a Day* stacks three brass beakers and attaches a baby pacifier, car keys and pencils. It recalls T. S. Eliot's line in "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" about the desperation of lives being measured out in coffee spoons. *Double Tall* furthers the use of coffee cups as possible metaphors for married couples or parents and children. Two cups become one, connected at the side. In this configuration, individuals cannot even order their own latte! *Impossible To-Do List* has a tower of nickel-silver sugar cubes touching another pile of tilting, lidded coffee cups. Perhaps not surprising for an artist who insists on writing too, stamped letters and phrases are prevalent throughout the coffee cup series. They add little or nothing and only serve to weakly bolster a meaning that is already visibly evident through the objects' compositions.

In this sense, the interior reliefs are better—word-free and beautifully rendered with miniature details of tools, furniture, cooking equipment and plumbing fixtures. Among *Kitchen*, *Bedroom*, *Bathroom*, *Laundry*, *Garden Shed* and *Living Room*, an entire novel or short-story collection could be written, so great are Baran-Mickle's non-verbal powers of narrative construction. Averaging 14 by 7 by 3 inches, each framed scene echoes earlier folk art objects that displayed small rooms. Executed in gleaming copper, brass, steel, nickel and sterling silver, however, Baran-Mickle's interiors take on compelling appearances, drawing in the viewer to witness the recently departed human presence. Open drawers, slices of bread, casually left toothbrushes and other items of domestic life are placed for our somewhat voyeuristic inspection.

Kitchen sets up a wallpaper pattern of knives, spoons and spatulas behind a countertop with copper bowls, bread and cutting board. *Living Room* presents an overstuffed sofa in a corner with floor lamp and end table nearby. *Bathroom* is equally straightforward with a nickel-surface mirror above a copper basin. The next rooms are more fantastical. In *Bedroom*, two rumpled metal pillows may stand in for the bed's occupants. Piled up with papers and a laptop computer, the bed has little room for connubial bliss. *Laundry* has a wallpaper pattern of metal coat hangers around a beautifully fashioned ironing board, laundry basket and a curtain fluttering in the wind.

Read as symbolic still lifes, the wall reliefs of William Baran-Mickle have a quiet, referential power. The question of sculptural status thus becomes irrelevant, just as the question of whether a brooch becomes a sculpture when it is not on the wearer's chest. Metal objects may have a hybrid status rather than fitting into prior art-historical categories. Through his powers of composition and material skills, the artist also inadvertently demonstrates how all the texts peppering the coffee cup sculptures are also unnecessary. Without recourse to text or writing explanatory reviews, Baran-Mickle is left to his own considerable artistic devices. As this body of work strongly suggests, this is more than enough to qualify as sculpture or fine art, which should bode well for the future.

Matthew Kangas, a Seattle-based art critic, is the author of *Craft and Concept: The Rematerialization of the Art Object*.

clockwise from top left
Impossible To-Do List, 2006
brass, nickel, copper and wood
14 1/4 x 10 x 8"

Double Tall, 2006
brass, copper, wood
7 x 8 1/4 x 7 1/4"

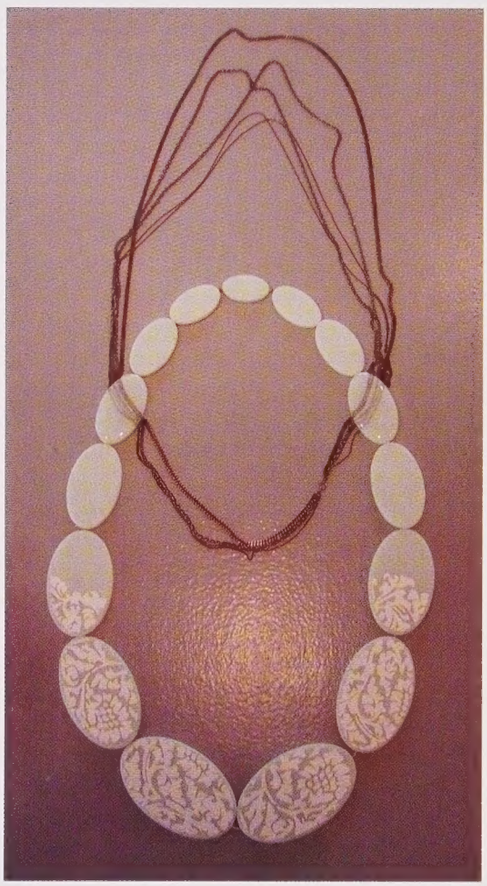
Laundry, 2006
brass, copper, nickel-silver, sterling silver
14 x 17 x 3 "
All photos: Nick Felkey

REVIEWS

"TRACY STEEPY: FIGHTING THE FLAT"

HEIDI LOWE – THE JEWELRY STUDIO, REHOBOTH, DELAWARE
SEPTEMBER 2 – 28, 2006

by SARAH MCCARRON



Tracy Steepy's "Fighting the Flat" is a stunning show, teeming with bold sensuality and detailed craftsmanship. Four necklaces, four brooches and a pair of earrings grace the walls of the intimate gallery. Made of Corian counter-top material, resin and oxidized silver, the pieces are smooth and seductive. They confidently radiate a playful elegance. Steepy's necklaces create space that demands to be entered, so they can drape elegantly over the back and shoulders. Demure clothes would do best to support this self-possessed jewelry—if clothes are necessary at all. The jewelry highlights the planes and contours of the body and could easily play against the naked human form. This show celebrates the topography of the body, a terrain where flatness emerges and recedes.

Steepy has created beads by carving a pattern out of Corian and filling in the negative space with colored resin. Reminiscent of Matisse's cutouts, the floral pattern is a clean silhouette that evokes vintage brocade fabric or wallpaper. Her colors are simple and rich. Blood red and cream. Minty sage. Plain gray. The final product is so smooth and flawless, one could easily doubt that it is handcrafted. There is no trace of process or struggle, except when Steepy herself calls attention to fabrication by deliberately playing with our expectations. On the beads of her necklaces, she draws the image of a chain with a mechanical pencil. Without this freehand drawing, her work would be too refined, too processed. She is able to go beyond a factory-produced standard to reveal the human hand behind the jewelry. This handiwork extends to the underbelly of her pieces, which only the wearer or an intimate companion might see. The jewelry winks at us flirtatiously, and we want to get close to it and find out where the real clasp is. Herein lies Steepy's transcendence: the sensuality of the pieces themselves generates a hunger for the bodies that wear them.

Steepy challenges our notions of the bead. The beads of her necklace *Double Chain*, gradually shift along the spectrum of flatness, beginning as spherical and eventually becoming patties. The oval beads of *Both* are so large and flat, they can be worn on either side, achieving dramatically different effects. One side is solid chartreuse, evoking a vintage, Pop-art feel. On the other side, her signature floral cutout of white Corian sits in a light minty-sage layer of resin. The beads can rotate around the chain individually, and the wearer has liberty to interlace the two designs.

A master of puns, Steepy juggles refined dignity with coarse humor. *Grey Pearl* is a flat gray Corian brooch with a spherical blob dripping out of the bottom. The globule is coated in resin, giving it a sheen that contrasts to the flat finish of the oval. The shape sparks associations of organic matter—a benign tumor, dripping sweat, a misbehaving ice cream cone. Looking closely, though, Steepy has drawn two of her signature pencil chains to converge at the bottom of the oval, just above the spherical blob. The growth becomes the three-dimensional pendant at the end of a woman's necklace, dangling on her chest. A crude form elicits sophisticated sensuality and the pendant cannot help but double as the woman's breast. We see beyond the flatness of the oval to the neckline of the wearer of the brooch. We want to touch the curves of both the brooch and the body that bears it.

With Space is a necklace whose style and form dramatically differentiate from the smooth coherence of the rest of the show. The most difficult of Steepy's pieces, it evokes a futuristic aesthetic. Three-dimensional geometrical patties form blatantly angular beads. A flat layer of resin hides any of Steepy's intricate design. The deliberate, forced angles of this necklace are an affront to the sensual curves of her other pieces. The jarring flatness comes at a price, obscuring Steepy's keen sense of subtle refinement.

The title "Fighting the Flat" insinuates an uphill struggle. As if flatness and two-dimensionality are as inherently oppressive and unconquerable as gravity. Who amongst us does not compete with flatness? We erect buildings. We get implants. We dislike flat feet, flat chests, flat soda, flat tires and flat conversation. We constantly fear the inescapable flat-lining of our pulse. The irony, of course, is that flatness is not fixed. This is Steepy's gift to us: a reckoning with our struggle, in which we see our delusion. When worn, her flat jewelry drapes over the contours of the body, creating space and moving in arcs and circles. Flatness is relative. Perhaps more than a struggle against it, Steepy's work celebrates its potential. It is out of flatness that form emerges.

Sarah McCarron is a freelance writer based in Delaware.

clockwise from top left
Grey Pearl, 2006
Corian, resin, stainless steel
2 1/2 x 3 x 1/2"

Double Chain (necklace), 2006
Corian, epoxy resin
19 x 19 x 1/2"

Both, 2006
Corian, resin, sterling silver
24 x 14 x 1/2"

"GREG WILBUR: NEW WORK"

VELVET DA VINCI, SAN FRANCISCO
SEPTEMBER 7 – OCTOBER 15, 2006

by JENNIFER CROSS GANS

The art of raising is traditionally associated with teapots, dishes and little silver bowls. Refreshingly, the new work of Greg Wilbur takes this technique to a magnificent new level. Wilbur produced 33 new works of impressive size, strength and delicacy.

At 32 inches wide, the table sculpture *Black Redd*, was one of several massive pieces raised from a single sheet of copper or bronze. Vessels that must have taken days to create were as smoothly modeled as clay, plump, voluptuous and begging to be touched. Several were designed to be interactive. *Black Redd*, for example, had 18 brilliant red balls of different sizes nestled in the deeply hammered surface that could be played with or rearranged. *Huddled Alert*, resembling massed boats on a Hobbit marina, could be taken apart and reconfigured. Ladles could be hung on the wall, used to serve party hooch, water planter boxes or hold tiny bouquets of flowers. Some vessels came with their own detachable metal stems, buds or flowers to create a moveable floral arrangement. In a few cases the foliage was part of the vessel itself, creating an unusual combination of solidarity and fluidity. Wilbur helpfully illustrated his planning process: he included a part-finished ladle showing how he cut the flat sheet, raised the container, leaving a long, curled strip of metal from which to sculpt the greenery. This technique was shown to magnificent effect in *Strings*, where the organically shaped vessel sprouted long, rythmically-arranged growths tipped with small fern-like buds.

Wilbur, who lives in the Northwest, is clearly inspired by his natural surroundings—the colors and textures of beaches, rocks and marine life, and the shapes of seaweed and those found in the woodlands. A couple of pieces were inspired by the juicy, voluptuous geoduck clams found on Oregon beaches. Others came together in delicately fluid wallpieces like *Blood Tangle*. Here, positive and negative sprays of leaves, stems and seed pods are wreathed and twined, offset by their background shadows to form a swaying forest and illuminated by large red and gold fruit-like shapes. Sometimes these creations were interactive, hiding a small dipper among the foliage, to remain empty or be filled with flowers or candles.

The surfaces on all his pieces invited study of their richness and variety. Some were deeply chased or textured. All were either heat treated or occasionally chemically patinaed. Several were selectively polished to create gold highlights on rim, lips and tendrils. Wilbur occasionally does produce more traditional silver bowls and teapots. Included in this exhibition was a beautifully executed silver sake set that was quickly snapped up by a collector.

Wilbur is very active in the Oregon art community, and is well-known to a following of collectors, but it's unfortunate that he rarely participates in the exhibitions that would bring him more well-deserved national and international exposure. This show left me with another more sober thought. Clearly the size and scale of his work demands a high level of strength and endurance, stressing hands, arms, and the entire spine. As he himself admits "this process requires hundreds, often thousands of repetitive blows, producing a modest amount of work from a single artist." A humble statement from such an impressive artist, who has worked full time as a studio metalsmith since 1978. One of his bronze vessels was titled *C6/C7* and contained a crack, acknowledging damaged vertebrae—part of the price he is paying to perfect his art. I just hope he doesn't succumb to metal fatigue.

Jennifer Cross Gans is a writer and studio jeweler in San Francisco.

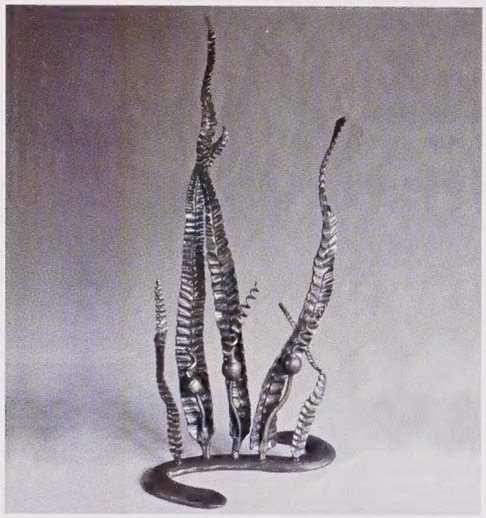
clockwise from top left
Huddled Alert, 2006
bronze
19 x 18 x 14"

Black Redd, 2006
copper
9 x 32 x 5"

Blood Tangle, 2006
bronze, copper
28 x 33 x 3"

Strings, 2006
copper
34 x 22 x 8"

REVIEWS



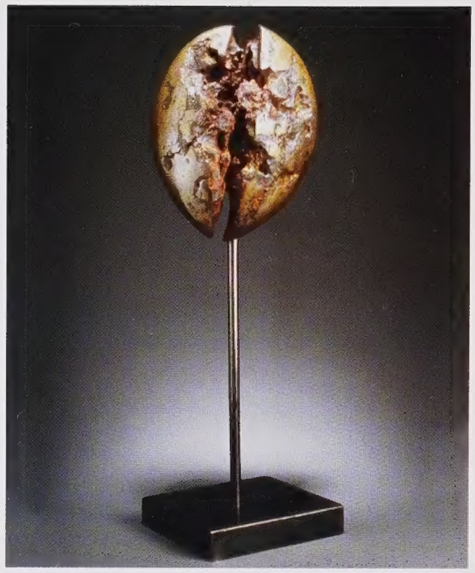
"BLOOM: FORGED WITH FIRE AND FORCE"

THE LYNN TENDLER BIGNELL GALLERY
AT BROOKFIELD CRAFT CENTER,
BROOKFIELD, CT
JUNE 18 – AUGUST 6, 2006

by MARJORIE SIMON

Even a modest show can offer an opportunity to learn a lot. To fully appreciate "Bloom," which featured three dozen ironworks by 25 artists, I researched the difference between iron (the element Fe), plain old steel (iron and carbon, the latter not exceeding 2%), carbon steel (alloy containing only carbon and no other alloys, such as manganese or silicon) and mild steel (very low level of carbon, less than .3%).[1] I always thought wrought iron was wrought and cast iron was cast. Not so. The descriptive terms refer to the composition of the iron, i.e., how much carbon or silica that creates a material capable of being wrought or cast. Controlling the addition of elements such as oxygen, carbon, manganese, and silicon, and working it by forging, quenching and rolling, results in physical properties that affect its strength, flexibility, and tension. The show's title, of course, refers to the physical (bloom iron), and the metaphysical (growth, generation, flowering) which many of the artists interpreted literally, to create botanical or floral imagery.

While the artist list did identify the materials used, nowhere was bloom iron explained. The curator could have seized this opportunity to educate viewers, who would then better appreciate what they were seeing. Bloom iron is an early form of iron—early historically and developmentally. A little mushy and porous, it is iron that is smelted in a bloomery (as opposed to a blast furnace or other modern crucible). Its appeal today has to do with connecting to a historical process and the thrill of making something from scratch. Because the bloomery cannot attain the high temperatures necessary to force impurities out of the iron, or control the amount of carbon in the metal, bloom iron is brittle and crude, lacking the strength and flexibility of steel. Yet, many ironworkers appreciate its raw beauty, the way you admire the deckle edge of handmade paper.



The tight parameters show off the range of the medium, from Lee Sauder's sculptures using the natural bloom iron (presumably the batch he describes on his chatty and informative website) to the refined and creamy black mild steel in Michael Rossi's fireplace tools. You can't keep your hands off this stuff. There were no signs saying don't touch, so I surreptitiously caressed Sauder's deceptively simple *Mollusca Vuptusz*, feeling the satiny surface. Sauder wasn't the only one to make his own iron. Michael McCarthy and Paul Spaulding supplemented homemade bloom iron with precious metals in their collaborative *Pipe Tomahawks*.

Stand-outs in the exhibition included Maegan Crowley's graceful steel *Candlesticks* and delicate *Full Bloom*, a hydrangea-like cluster of blossoms atop a forged hollow stand. In the candlesticks, Crowley combined her own matrix dies with Elizabeth Brim's innovation of inflating pillow forms with compressed air. Holly Fisher's *Fourteen Freestanding Flowers* of forged steel achieved a paper-like lightness, creating a bouquet of black peonies. These works contrasted nicely with the bulkier cast iron of Nol Putnam's *Swamp Growth*, and John Rais' colorful steel assemblages. Michael Rossi, a very recent Cranbrook graduate, rose above the literal with *Grass Roots Tools*, using very black mild steel in contrast with bright green, presumably flammable, vinyl grass.

Forty per cent of the artists in the show were women, an arena once inhabited only by Elizabeth Brim. In light of the stated theme, it's hard to know if hard-partying blacksmithing is being feminized as a result. Bob Compton's *Nicotina Fe* and Scott Lankton's bonsai-infused *Dogwood for Dad* both recreated real flowers.

There's little in this show to make Gary Griffin watch his back, but lots to suggest blacksmithing is alive and well, especially in functional objects for domestic life. Community craft centers play an important role in keeping the arts alive by linking the artist's studio and educated consumers. In this context, Jack and Judith Russell and their staff at the Brookfield Craft Center are to be applauded for their continued contribution to quality craft and community.

Marjorie Simon is a metalsmith and writer based in Philadelphia.

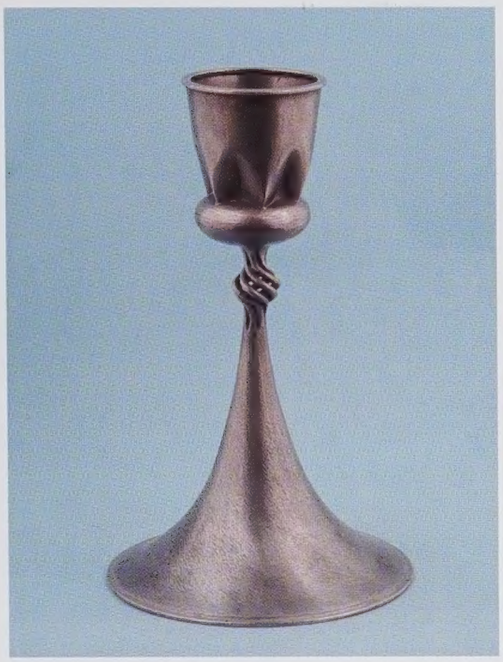
clockwise from top left
Lee Sauder
Mollusca Voluptusz
bloom iron, steel base

Maegan Crowley
Full Bloom, 2006
forged/fabricated steel

Bob Compton
Nicotina Fe, 2004
forged steel

Nol Putnam
Swamp Growth, 2006
pure iron, wrought iron

[1] http://www.azom.com/details.asp?ArticleID=2537



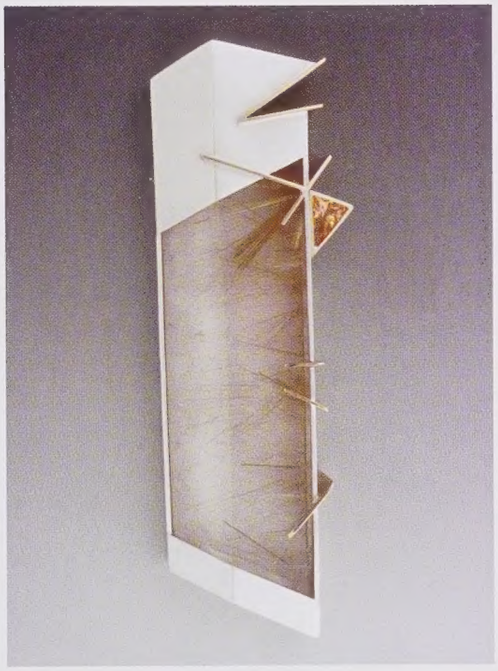
"METALSMITHS AND MENTORS: FRED FENSTER AND ELEANOR MOTY AT UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON"

CHAZEN MUSEUM OF ART,
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
APRIL 29 – JULY 30, 2006

by FRANK C. LEWIS

Long familiar with the work of both Eleanor Moty and Fred Fenster, I have often wondered how such luminaries ever managed the challenges of teaching technique and conceptualization while instilling in students the need to find their own way. Walking into "Metalsmiths and Mentors," the question seemed even more pertinent.

The drive and vision of these metalsmiths/mentors is formidable. Fenster's mastery of raising results in objects that combine fluidity with the look of delicate, crumpled and folded paper (*Kiddush Cup*, 1975). When seen together, many of his forms suggest a methodical exploration of the possibilities of raising and forging. A choker from 1986 involves a simple but elegant half twist, while a slightly later example reveals a complexity worthy of Bernini. His long investigations into Jewish ceremonial objects reveal a careful and relentless exploration of variations on standard forms.



Fenster's surface effects are near minimal, relying on the particular sheen and gloss of material or the shadows created by subtle folds, almost as if a paper cup has been crushed and then pulled back into shape. I stood mesmerized by a copper pot, fairly traditional in form and technique but with a perfect, thin solder seam running the entire height. That seam, like a laser, spoke eloquently of Fenster's skill as both a craftsman and an aesthetician.

Like Fenster, Eleanor Moty relishes a beauty that is appreciated through careful and meticulous study of materials. Her work seems to have moved from complex textures and colors (*Neckpiece*, 1972) to a more refined play between crystal like shapes and the pure color of silver, gold and rutilated quartz (*Interrupted Vertical Brooch*, 1990). A natural occlusion in quartz, a thin line, is echoed and enhanced by framing elements of precious metal. Edges, geometric volumes, diffractions, and reflections create a hyper-modern sense of order, but without the coldness of so much modernist design. Moty shares with Fenster an aesthetic grounded in the artist's sensitivity to the formal qualities of materials.

The third component of the exhibition was a selection of objects by Fenster and Moty's many students. One is not surprised by the quality of the craft on display. The variety of approaches suggests that for all of their personal rigor in a modernist vein, both professors encouraged students to find their own path, informed by intellect, a respect for materials, and exquisite technique. Students of Fenster and Moty featured in the exhibition included Vicki Sedman, Carol Kumata, Jon Michael Route, Paulette Werger, and Eun-Mee Chung, among others. Lisa Gralnick and Kim Cridler, present faculty at the UW-Madison, were also represented as evidence of the continuation of the strong metals program in Madison that Fenster and Moty helped to develop.

Frank C. Lewis, a former editor of *Metalsmith*, is director of exhibitions and curator of the collections of the Wriston Art Galleries at Lawrence University in Appleton, Wisconsin.

clockwise from top left
Fred Fenster
Kiddush Cup, 1975
pewter
9 14 x 5 1/2"

Fred Fenster
Choker, ca. 1986
sterling silver
diameter 5 1/2"

Eleanor Moty
Interrupted Vertical Brooch, 1990
sterling silver, 27k and 18k gold, topaz, rutilated quartz
4 x 1 3/8 x 1/2"

Eleanor Moty
Neckpiece, 1972
sterling silver, photo-etched silver, silver electroplate, quartz crystals, Plexiglas
7 x 7 x 2" 1972

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by Dana Singer

top to bottom
Todd Reed
Bracelet, 2006
18k yellow gold, raw diamonds
7 x 1 x 1/4"
Photo: azadphoto.com 2006

Cynthia Eid
Dancing Hallelujah, 2006
Sculpture for a Temple Beth Abraham, Nashua, NH
copper, bronze, patina, lacquer
72 x 48 x 3"

Students at Hiko Mizuno Jewelry College, Tokyo, receiving information on *Metalsmith* and SNAG.

Presenters and judges at the gala awards ceremony during the Hong Kong International Jewelry Forum.

right
John Medwedeff
Bloom, 2006
forged and fabricated bronze
12' x 4' x 2.5'
Lewis & Clark College, Godfrey, IL

SNAG Professional Development Seminar in Memphis

SNAG will again produce its Professional Development Seminar just before the conference begins, on June 13. The theme is "Signature Style, Material and Methods: The Path to Success." Todd Reed, Cynthia Eid, and John Medwedeff will speak to this topic from various perspectives. In a smaller session titled "Artistic Identity," Brooke Marks Swanson, Peggy Eng, Lola Brooks, Don Friedlich and Suzanne Ramljak will explore the key elements for artistic success. Craig Nutt and Dave Kotary will present "The Insurance Show," which will tackle thorny business insurance issues with humor and insight, sponsored by CERF.

SNAG Recent Workshop Grants

With funding from SNAG's Workshop Grants Program, the Australian National University hosted a workshop by Darlys Ewoldt on "Vessels, Patinas and Containment," and she also gave a public lecture. The University of Central Oklahoma used their grant to host Andy Cooperman's workshop, "Imaginative Captures." These competitive grants are available to help sponsor guest artists to present workshops and a lecture to the general public. A different group of jurors look at each cycle of applications. This most recent round was juried by Cappy Counard, Yuyen Chang, and Curtis Arima.

SNAG in Asia

President Sam Shaw traveled to Hong Kong last December to represent SNAG at the first International Jewelry Design, Creativity, and Technology Conference and forum held there. Shaw gave a presentation about SNAG and was one of the featured speakers on the conference program. Earlier in the year, SNAG member and educator James Bove traveled to Japan, teaching at Hiko Mizuno Jewelry College, in Tokyo, and Yamanashi Institute of Gemology and Jewelry Arts, in Yamanashi. At both schools, he actively promoted *Metalsmith* and SNAG membership, handing out SNAG brochures and complimentary copies of the Summer 2006 issue.

SNAG Conference Sites Set through 2012

The Seattle Metals Guild will host the SNAG conference in Seattle in 2011, and the Washington, D.C. Guild of Goldsmiths will host the SNAG conference in 2012. Most will recall the very successful conferences hosted in these two cities back in 1998 and 1996, respectively. Upcoming conference sites between now and then are Memphis 2007, hosted by the Metal Museum and chaired by Jim Wallace and Charles Ferryman; Savannah in 2008, hosted by the Savannah College of Art & Design, and chaired by Lanelle Keyes and Bonnie Kubasta; Philadelphia in 2009, chaired by Douglas Bucci and Christina Miller; and Houston in 2010, hosted by the Houston Metal Arts Guild and chaired by Diane Falkenhagen and Sandra Zilker.

Dana Singer is executive director of SNAG.

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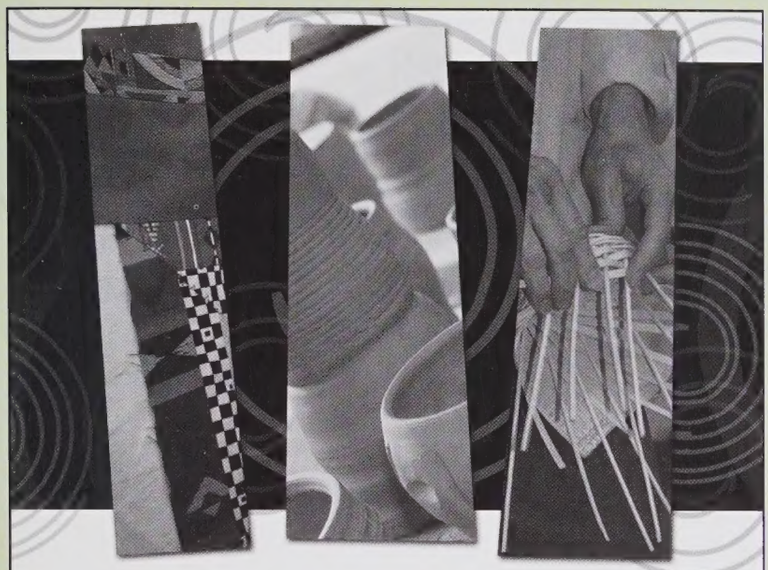

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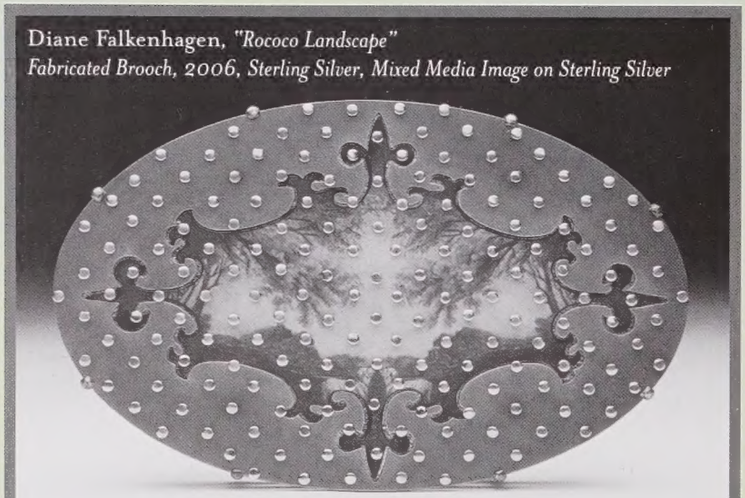
Diane Falkenhagen, *"Rococo Landscape"*
Fabricated Brooch, 2006, Sterling Silver, Mixed Media Image on Sterling Silver

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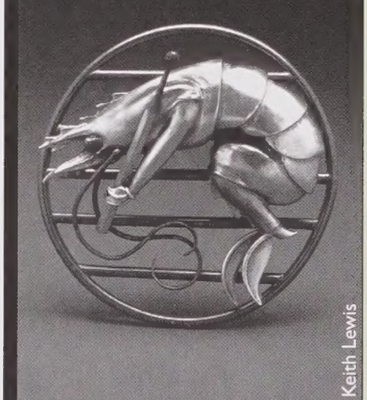
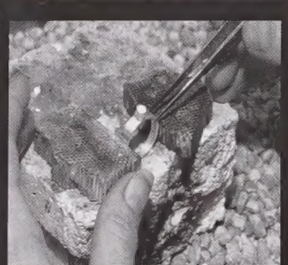

Keith Lewis



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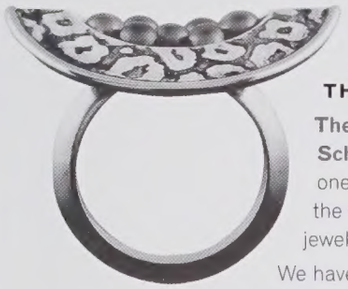

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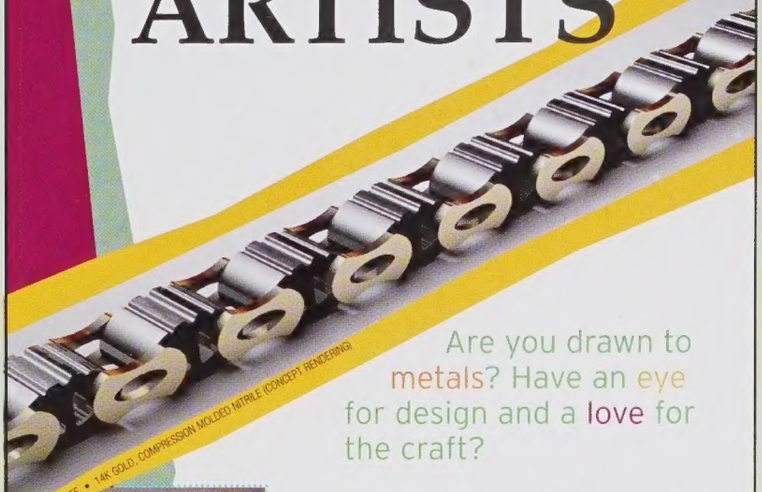

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clockwise from top

Douglas Harling
Title: Sea Saw
Description: 1-3/8"x2-1/4"x1/2", 22k gold, 14k gold pin mechanism, and freshwater pearls
Photo: Douglas Harling

Namu Cho
Title: Rings
Description: Damascus steel with 22k gold, 18k gold
Photo: Hap Sakwa Photography

(Issue #5 2006 Metalsmith)
Cover: Kevin Coates
Title: Snakes to Apples (cup) 2002
Description: height 6 1/2", nephryte jade, silver, parcel-gilt, part patinated, coral amber
Photo: Clarissa Bruce

Sarah Perkins
Title: Stubble Beggar's Bowl
Description: 3"x4"x4", copper, enamel
Photo: Sarah Perkins

Kiwon Wang
Title: Water Drop Series
Description: 2-1/2"x2-1/2"x3/8, 14k gold, pearl, sterling silver
Photo: Kiwon Wang

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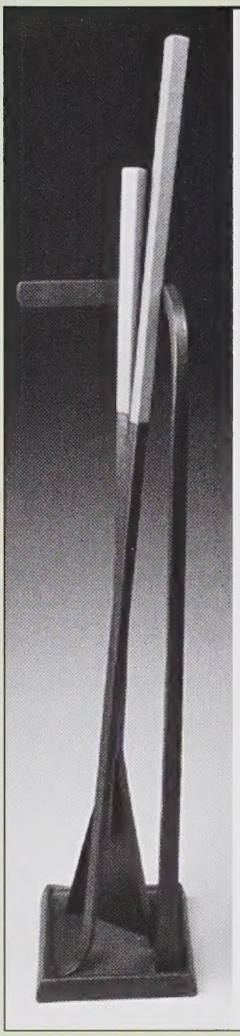

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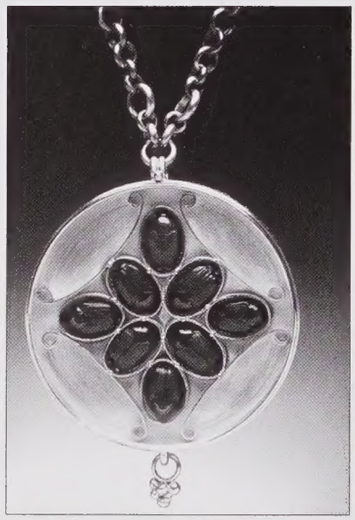

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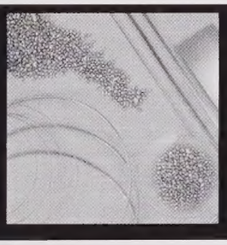

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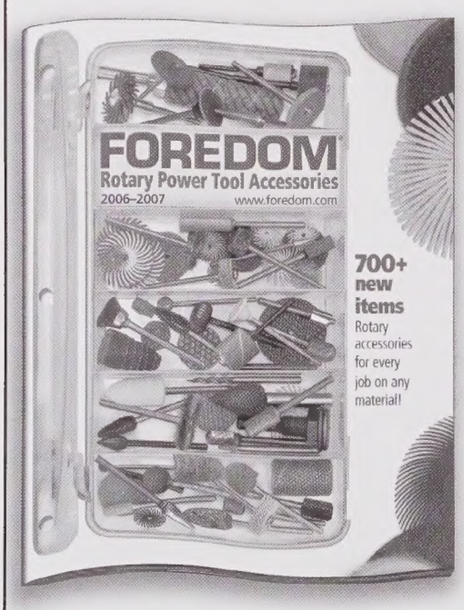

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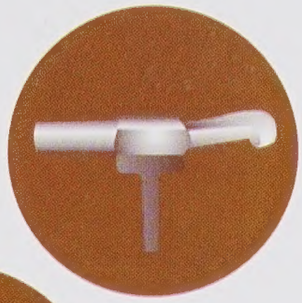

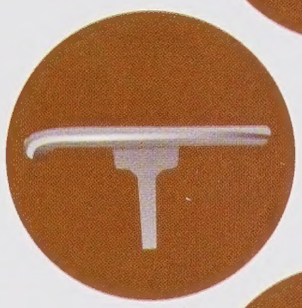

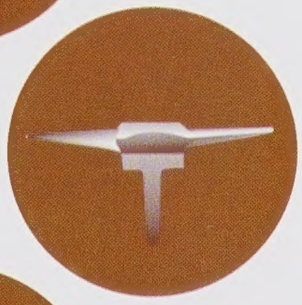

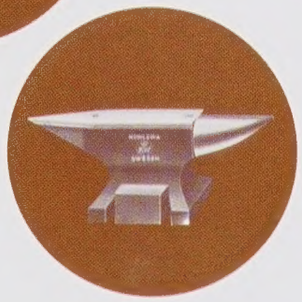

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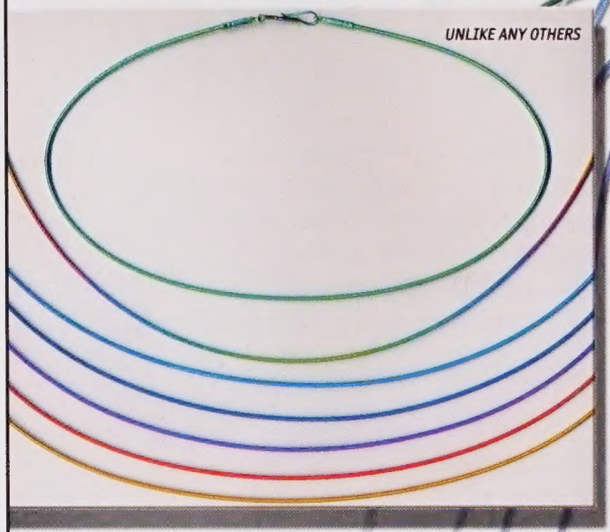

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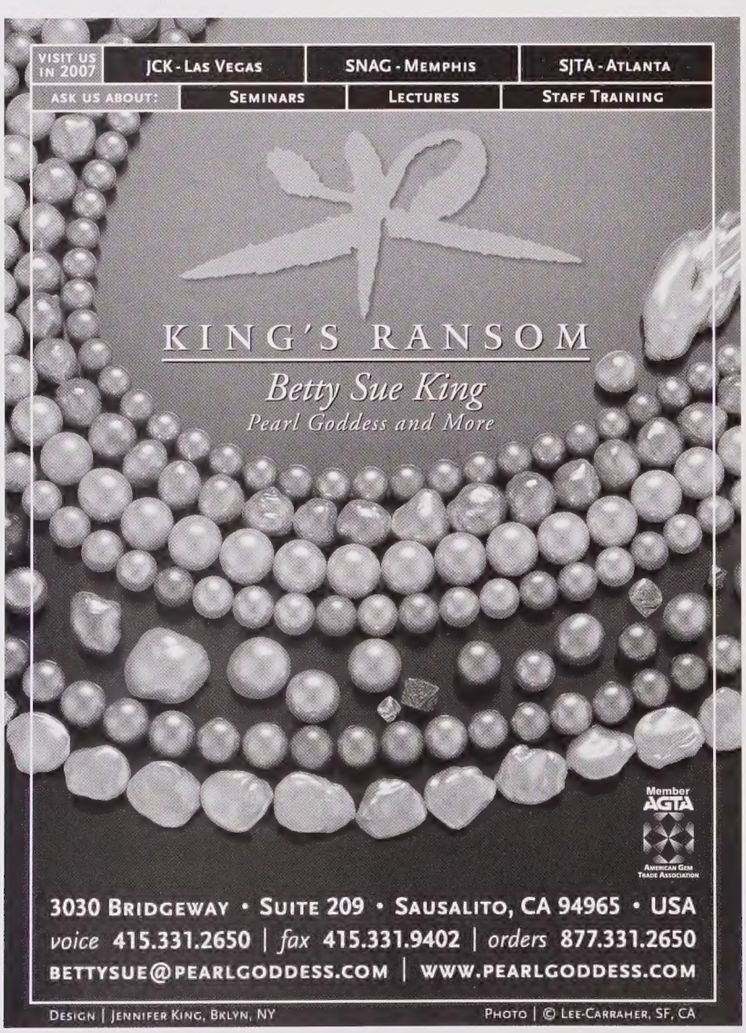

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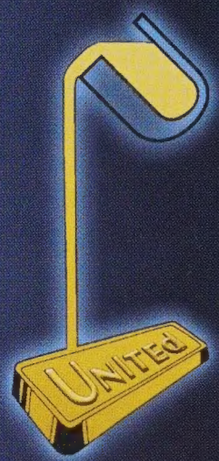

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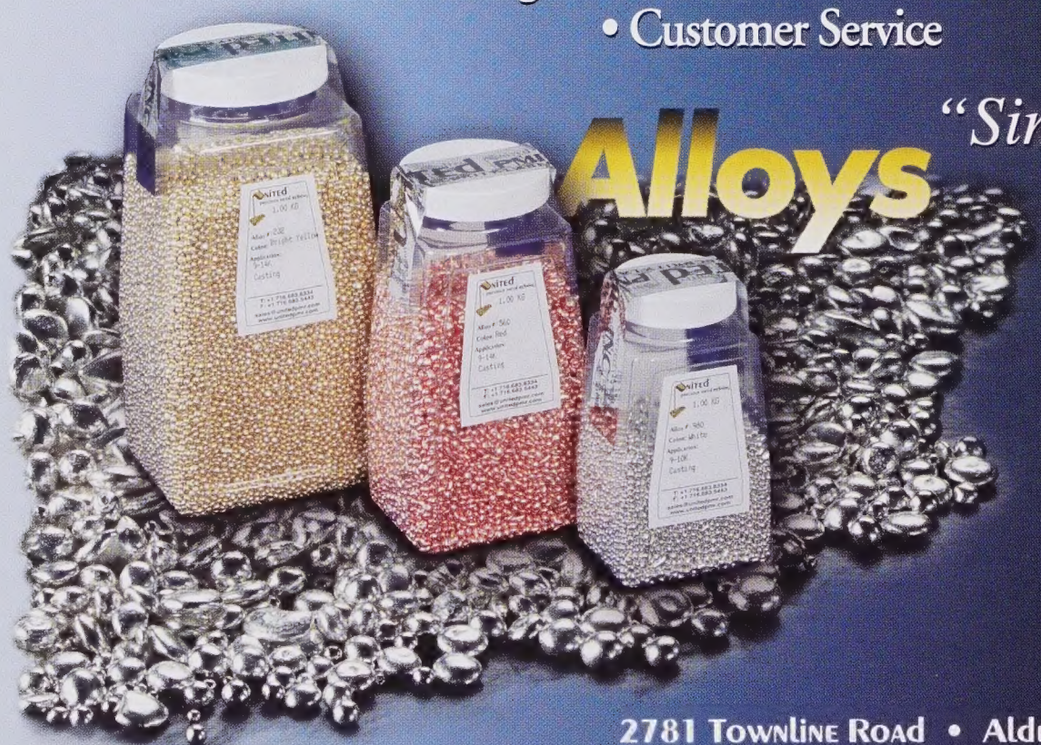

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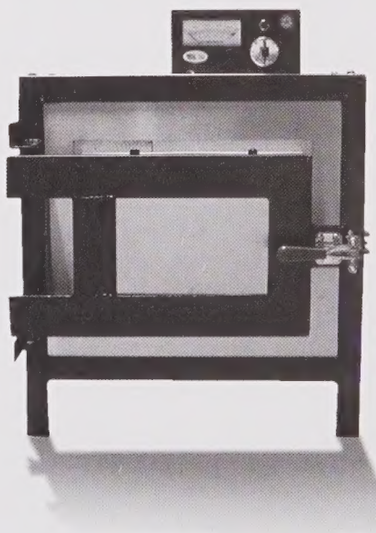

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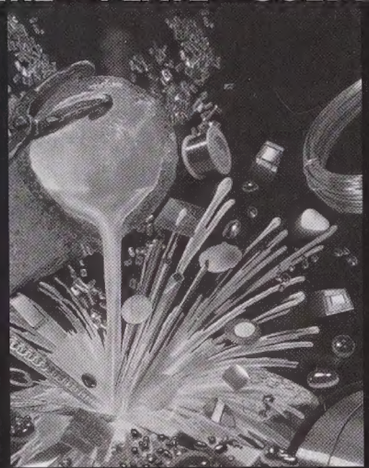

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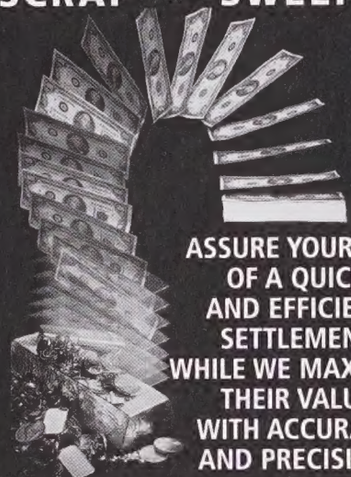

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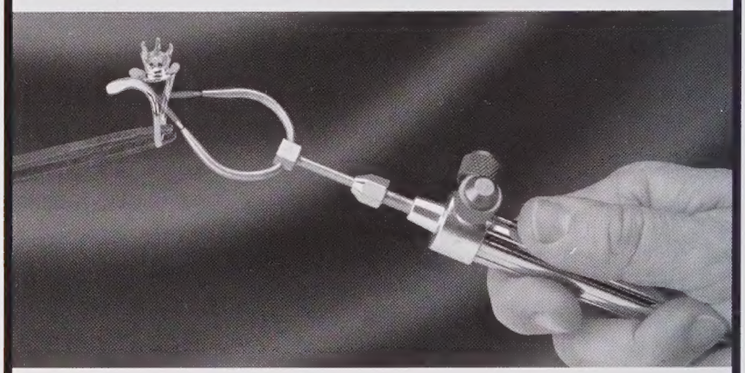

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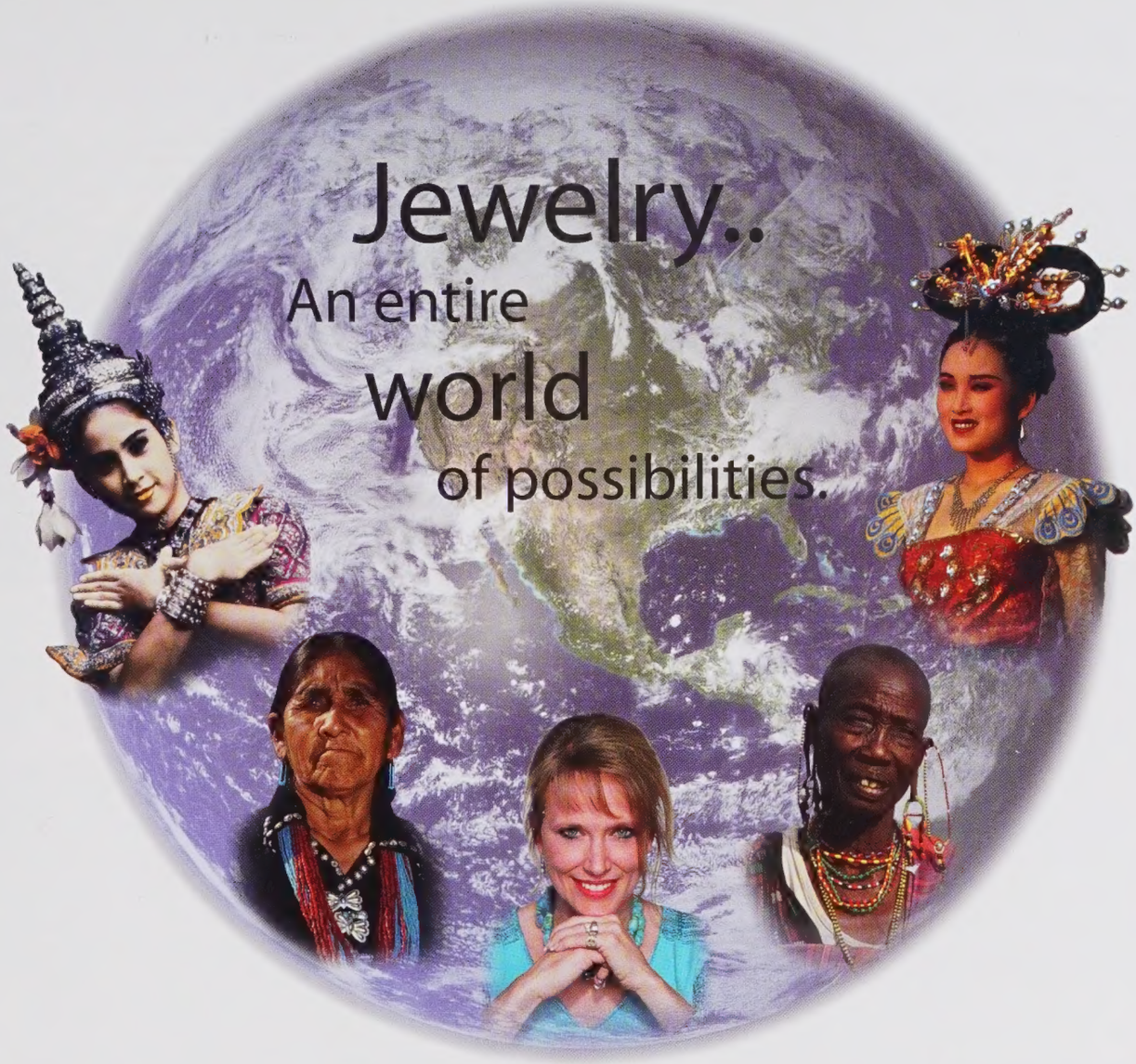

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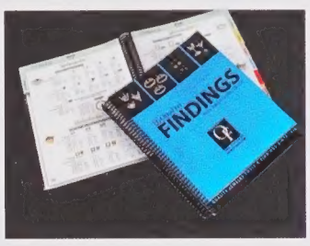

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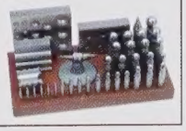
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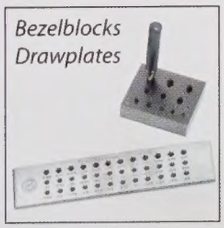
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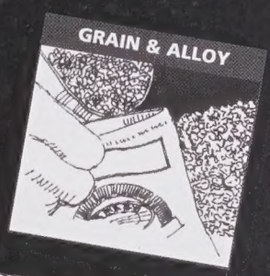

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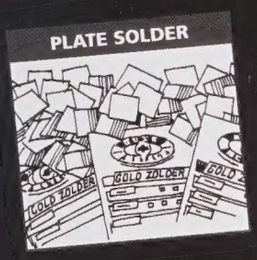

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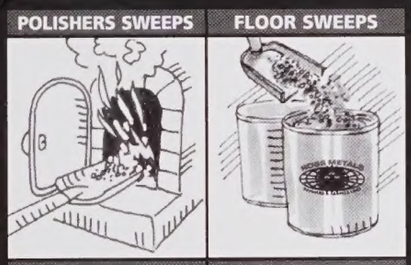

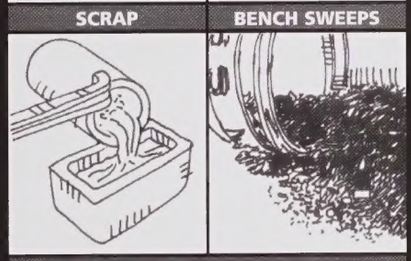

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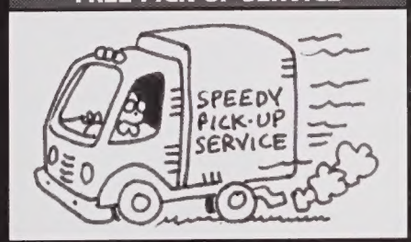

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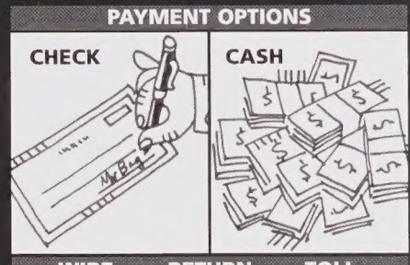

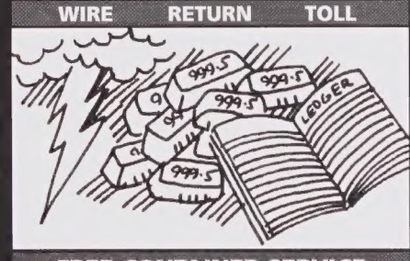

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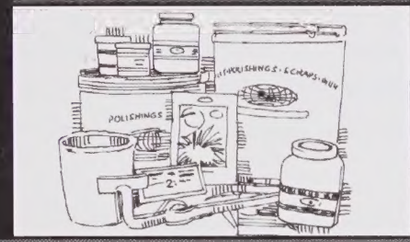

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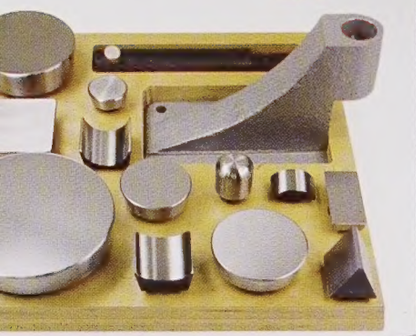

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Ⓐ PLANISHING STAKE SET [Item 102-751] Includes 12 planishing stakes in the following shapes: 5 Flat Round, 1 Domed Round, 1 Flat Rectangle, 1 Flat Square, 2 Concave, 1 Convex, and 1 Wedge. Also includes a cast iron stake holder, an adapter for the smaller stakes, and a wood stand. **Ⓑ LONDON STYLE COMBINATION ROLLING MILL** [Item 190-824] This well-made mill features 130 mm rollers that have been ground to a mirror finish on laser optic grinders then hardened to Rc 63 for strength and durability. The 4:1 gear ratio makes it easy to use and the calibrated indicator dials allow for precise adjustment of the rollers. Made in Ukraine. **Ⓒ ROTAMAX 25 FLEXSHAFT KIT** [Item 236-991] Our most powerful flexible shaft motor, the Rotamax 25 delivers the torque you need to perform nearly any grinding, carving or finishing task. Kit includes: $^1/_4$ HP / 115VAC / 20,000 RPM ball bearing motor, no. 30 style (1" diameter) handpiece, electronic foot rheostat, 39" long flexible shaft, spring reinforced sheath, and chuck key. Made in USA and backed by our 1-year warranty **Ⓓ DOMED PLANISHING STAKE SET** [Item 102-762] Includes 12 planishing stakes in the following shapes: 6 Round (high and low dome), 1 Flat Rectangle, 1 Flat Square, 2 Concave, 1 Convex, and 1 Wedge. Also includes a cast iron stake holder, an adapter for the smaller stakes, and a wood stand. **Ⓔ PEDDINGHAUS HAMMERS** - These high quality hammers from Peddinghaus feature forged steel heads mounted in hardwood handles. They're available in a wide variety of styles, including: Planishing, Forming, Raising, and Embossing. Made in Germany. **Ⓕ SMITH ACETYLENE & AIR TORCH KIT** [Item 114-400] Provides a fast, concentrated flame (up to 4800° F) without the use of an oxygen tank. Ideal for soldering, brazing, annealing, and small melting jobs. Kit includes torch handle, no. 00 tip (very fine), adjustable acetylene regulator, 6 foot hose with B fittings ($^9/_{16}$"), and torch lighter. *For use with B size acetylene tank (adapter required for use with MC size tank).* Made in USA. **Ⓖ JUMP RING MAKER** [Item 400-125] Produce jump rings quickly and easily with this time-saving device. Coil your wire around one of the twenty mandrels (diameters range from 2.5 to 12 mm) using the hand-winder. Once the coil is formed, place it in the adjustable coil holder and saw through it using the included rotary saw and handpiece guide. It's that easy! *Flexshaft machine with 1" diameter (No. 30 style) handpiece required (not included).* **Ⓗ GUILLOTINE SHEARS** [Item 410-946: 6" blade, Item 410-948: 12" blade] Available in two sizes, these table-top shears feature precisely ground and hardened high carbon steel blades, steel tables, and adjustable work stops. Both models can cut non-ferrous sheet up to 2.4 mm thick (10 ga) or mild steel sheet up to 1.6 mm thick (14 ga).

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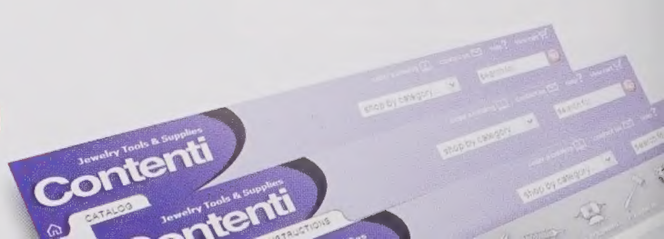

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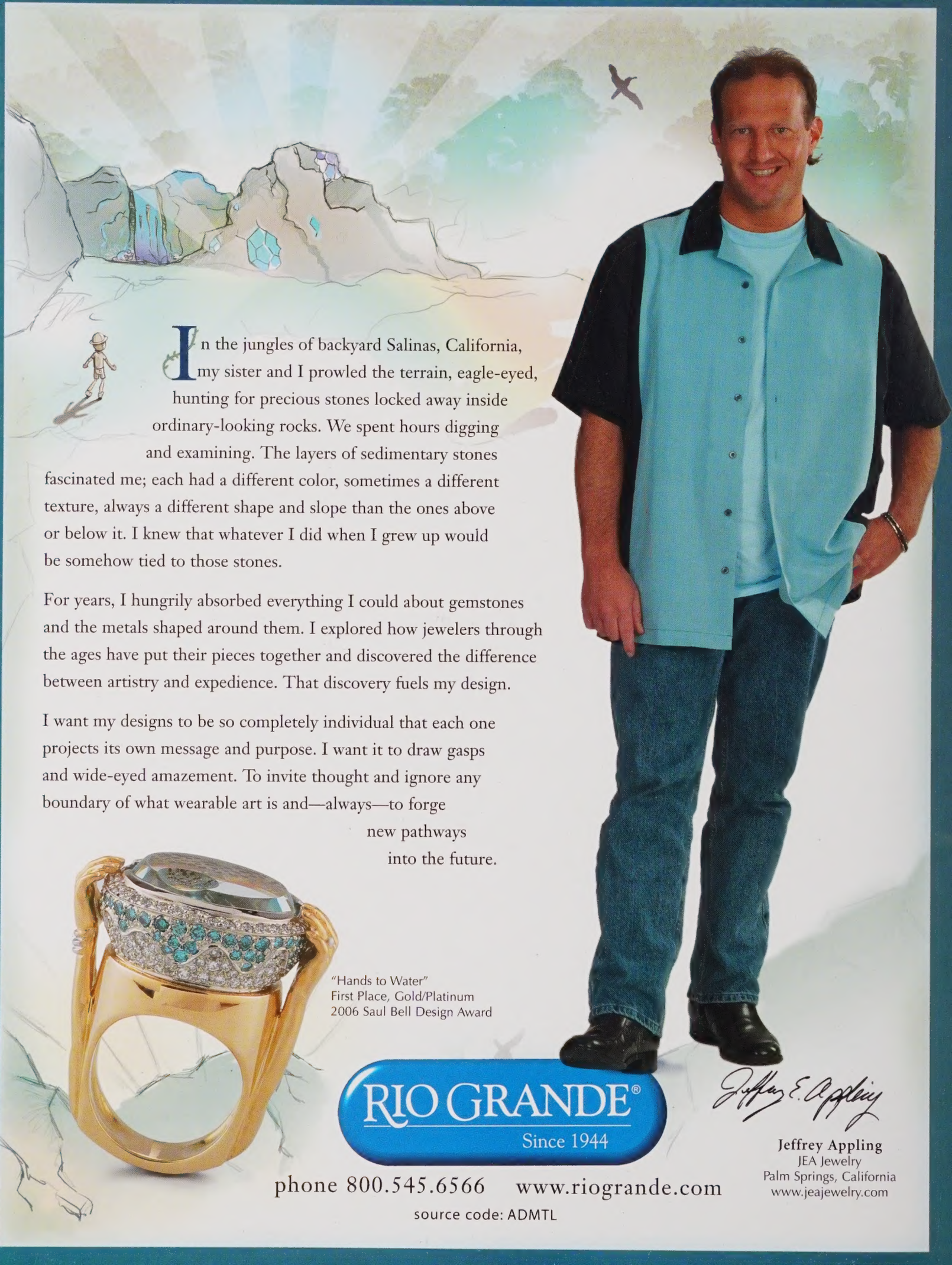

In the jungles of backyard Salinas, California, my sister and I prowled the terrain, eagle-eyed, hunting for precious stones locked away inside ordinary-looking rocks. We spent hours digging and examining. The layers of sedimentary stones fascinated me; each had a different color, sometimes a different texture, always a different shape and slope than the ones above or below it. I knew that whatever I did when I grew up would be somehow tied to those stones.

For years, I hungrily absorbed everything I could about gemstones and the metals shaped around them. I explored how jewelers through the ages have put their pieces together and discovered the difference between artistry and expedience. That discovery fuels my design.

I want my designs to be so completely individual that each one projects its own message and purpose. I want it to draw gasps and wide-eyed amazement. To invite thought and ignore any boundary of what wearable art is and—always—to forge new pathways into the future.

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